

City of Deer Lodge, MT Downtown Master Plan COUNCIL DRAFT - November 2017



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**LAND
SOLUTIONS, LLC**

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Reserved for Resolution

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Thank You Citizens of Deer Lodge!

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Part I - Introduction

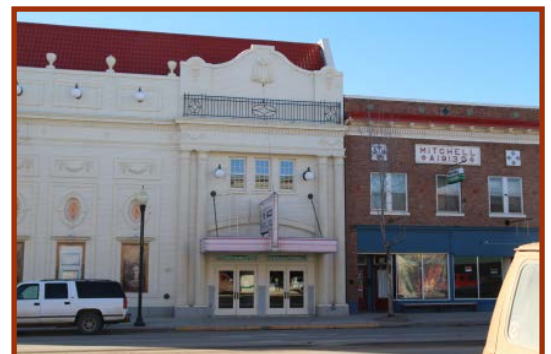
Deer Lodge Overview

Located in the heart of the Deer Lodge Valley, the City of Deer Lodge is surrounded by the abundant natural beauty that Montanans cherish. Within a short drive residents and visitors can access unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities in the Flint Creek range and on the Clark Fork River. Within the City itself are attractions that draw visitors from across the region and country – namely the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site and the Old Prison and Auto Museums. In the center of Deer Lodge is the downtown, filled with historic buildings, unique local businesses, and local theaters that other similarly sized communities dream about.

Downtown Deer Lodge is and has been the heart and soul of the community; it is the center of commercial, civic and social activity in the City. However, downtown Deer Lodge, like many downtowns throughout Montana, is not without its struggles. Vacant storefronts on Main Street, businesses closing, and competition with online retailers and nearby retail markets are a few examples that exemplify the challenges currently facing downtown. Despite these challenges, in recent years downtown has shown signs of growth with several new businesses opening on Main Street. This plan seeks to establish a strategic path for building on recent growth and capitalizing on local assets to create a vibrant and welcoming downtown for residents and visitors alike.

What is a Downtown Master Plan?

Deer Lodge’s Downtown Master Plan serves as a guide for downtown improvements and revitalization. The plan is intended to be both actionable and achievable, with the intent that it will be used by the City of Deer Lodge and partnering organizations to achieve





measurable results on both short-term and long-term projects. With that in mind, the plan includes detailed short, medium, and long-term action strategies for the betterment of downtown and the community as a whole. While the Downtown Master Plan is a City sponsored effort, it is really a community plan. Bringing this plan to fruition will require close coordination between the City and community partners, as each will have different strengths, assets, and capacities needed to put the plan into action.

The Downtown Master Plan includes three distinct study areas, encompassing land within the “interchange to interchange” area. The plan primarily focuses on the downtown planning area which includes Main Street from Higgins Avenue south to Conley Avenue – see Map 1. The plan also addresses the north side planning area stretching north from Higgins Avenue to the north interchange with I-90, as well as the south side planning area which extends to the southern interchange with I-90 and includes Arrowstone Park. Additionally, because the success of downtown hinges on its relationship with the rest of the community and region, the Downtown Master Plan also addresses areas adjacent to downtown, such as the area surrounding the Clark Fork River.

Previous Planning Efforts

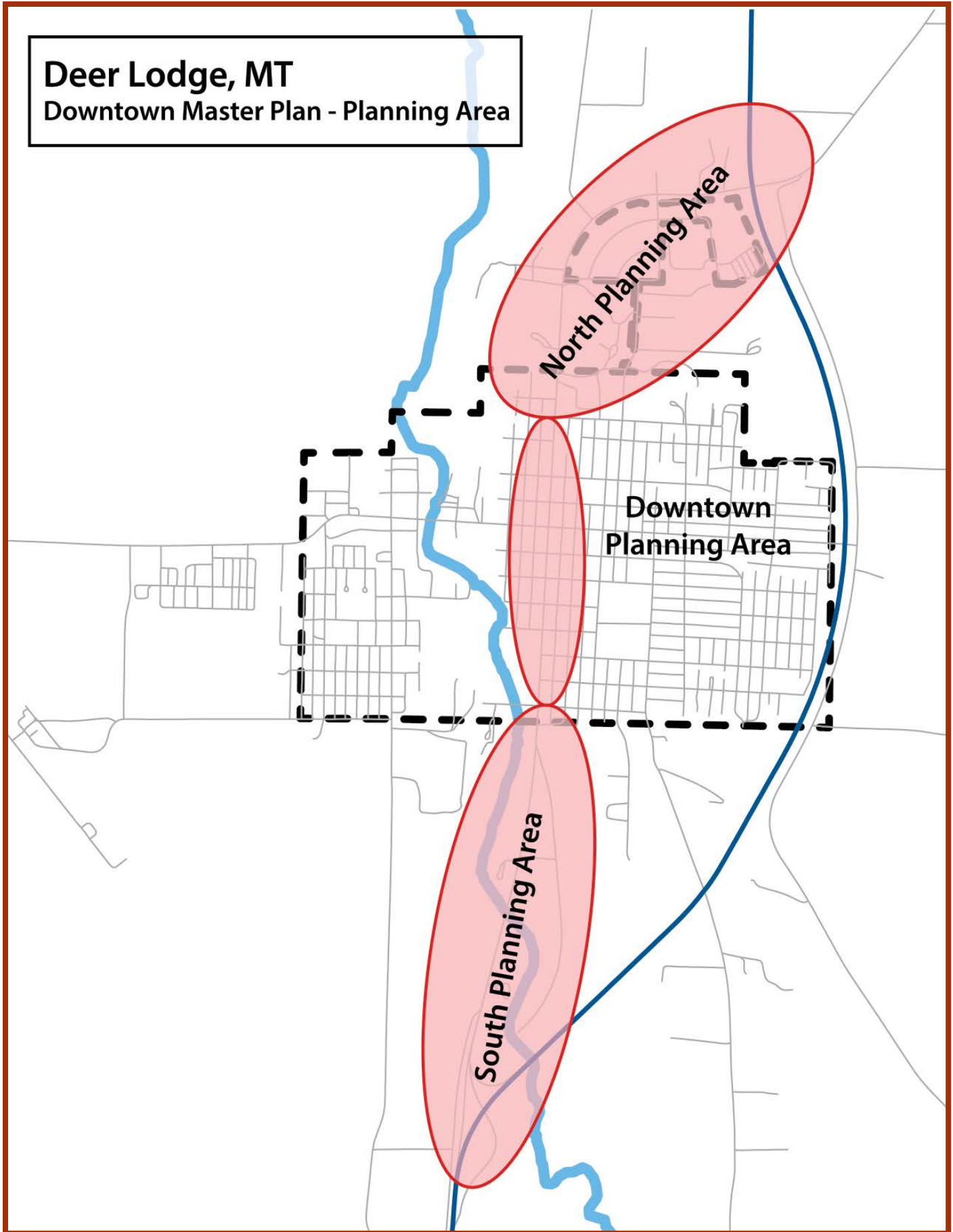
In the past several years the City of Deer Lodge and Powell County have actively engaged in several planning efforts that relate to downtown. Rather than try to recreate the wheel, the Downtown Master Plan builds on these efforts and provides additional focus and detail for how to put the recommendations from these collective planning efforts into action. Below is a brief summary of these efforts.

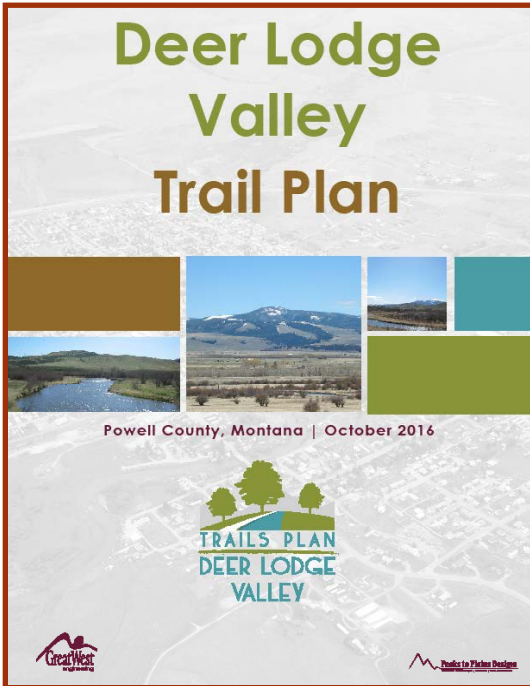
Deer Lodge Growth Policy

The City of Deer Lodge Growth Policy was updated in 2015 as an amendment to the City’s 2008 Growth Policy. The Growth Policy update focused on a variety of key issues including downtown revitalization, housing, and the brownfield program. The downtown revitalization portion of the plan provides detailed recommendations around four main themes – organization,



Map 1 - Downtown Planning Area





branding and promotion, design, and economic development. The Downtown Master Plan uses these recommendations as a starting point and to build in more detail for implementation.

Deer Lodge Resource Team Assessment

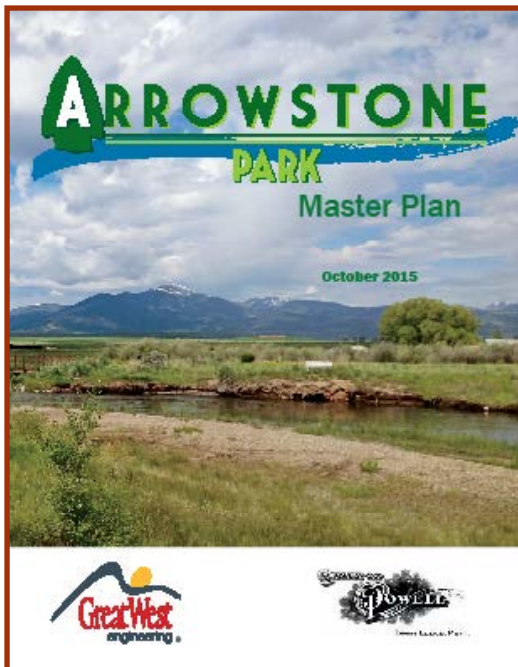
The resource team assessment was completed by the Montana Economic Developers Association during the spring of 2016. The assessment was intended to evaluate Deer Lodge’s assets and challenges and provide recommendations for improving environmental, societal, and economic aspects of the City. During the assessment and accompanying public outreach effort, the following key topic areas were identified – housing, downtown revitalization, communication, economic development, tourism and promotion, trails and recreation, and infrastructure. The assessment report provides detailed recommendations for each topic area. The assessment report provides a wealth of recent information and knowledge, which is directly pertinent to the Downtown Master Plan. As with the Growth Policy, the recommendations from the resource team assessment have been used as basis for developing action strategies in the Downtown Master Plan.

Arrowstone Park Plan

The Arrowstone Park Plan was developed in 2015 by the Powell County Parks Board, which includes a Deer Lodge City Council representative. The plan includes a variety of proposed improvements and design recommendations for Arrowstone Park. Specifically, the plan proposes adding additional amenities including a stage, pavilion, and picnic areas as well as trail extensions.

Deer Lodge Valley Trails Plan

The Deer Lodge Valley Trails Plan was developed in 2016 by the Powell County Parks Board. The plan is divided into three geographic areas - Garrison to Deer Lodge, Deer Lodge, and Deer Lodge to Racetrack. The plan details different options for extending trails north and south in the Deer Lodge Valley as well as detailed recommendation for trail extensions in the City of Deer Lodge.



Planning Process

Deer Lodge’s downtown master planning process began in April of 2017 with the City contracting with Land Solutions, LLC to assist with developing the plan. The planning processes was broken into the three primary tasks:

1. Existing conditions analysis and identification of issues and opportunities (Chapter II of this plan)
2. Public involvement (described below)
3. Action Plan (Chapter III of this plan)



Public Process

The public process for the Downtown Master Plan included seeking input and ideas from community members through two public meetings, a community wide survey, and a business owners survey. The City’s Economic Growth and Development Committee served as the steering committee for the plan’s development, providing guidance and oversight during the process. The results of the public process are shown in Appendix A.



Structure of plan

Deer Lodges Downtown Master Plan is broken into three sections – introduction, existing conditions analysis, and the action plan. The existing conditions analysis assess where Deer Lodge is today and identifies opportunities for improving downtown. The analysis, along with public feedback, form the basis for the action plan. The action plan is the most critical element of the Downtown Master plan as it lays out the individual steps for creating the thriving downtown that the City and its residents envision.

Action Plan

The action plan contains a series of objectives and accompanying action strategies. Each action strategy contains detailed guidance for moving forward, a list of partnering agencies, a timeframe for how long it will take to implement each action, and a priority ranking. To focus the action plan, the objectives and actions are organized around five broad themes outlined below.





1. Transportation
2. Appearance
3. Economic Development
4. Organization
5. Branding and Promotion

Vision Statement

This plan was created as a statement of the Deer Lodge community's future aspirations for downtown. It reflects the input of community members and the previous efforts on part of the City to plan for the future of Deer Lodge. The vision statement below is a reflection of what Deer Lodge residents want downtown to look and feel like in the future.



Downtown Deer Lodge is the lifeblood of the community. Downtown has a vibrant, social, and welcoming atmosphere that embodies the small-town character of Deer Lodge. Historic buildings have been preserved and maintained as homes for a healthy mix of retail businesses, services, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Downtown Deer Lodge is a public gathering space for friends and families to congregate, socialize, and shop in local businesses. The Clark Fork River more than ever is a community asset, with in-town fishing access and clear connections to downtown. Tourists continue to flock to Deer Lodge to visit Grant-Kohrs and the Old Prison and Auto Museums with downtown connecting these two destinations. While downtown has made Deer Lodge a destination onto itself, it is the community as a whole and its people which serve to encourage new residents and businesses to plant their roots in Deer Lodge.



Part II - Existing Conditions

Trade Area Analysis

For purposes of analyzing local economic conditions in Deer Lodge and identifying market opportunities, a custom drawn trade area was developed for Deer Lodge – see Map 2. The trade area was developed based on Deer Lodge’s proximity to competing retail markets as well as drive times to nearby communities. Deer Lodge’s trade area includes the areas where downtown is likely to draw the majority of its day-to-day customers. Communities in the trade area include Deer Lodge, Drummond, Avon, Gold Creek, Garrison, and Racetrack. Outside of this area, individuals are more likely to rely on other regional communities for their shopping needs, including, Butte, Anaconda, Helena, Missoula, and/or Philipsburg.

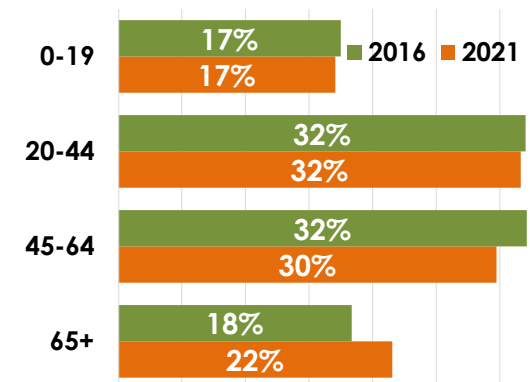
Demographic and Economic Characteristics

As of 2016, the Deer Lodge trade area had a population of 7,069 of which 3,058 lived in the City of Deer Lodge. Since 2010, the population of the trade area has declined and is projected to continue to decline slightly over the next five years – see Table 1. The median age in the trade area is 45.3 which is older than that of Montana at 39.7. In terms of age distribution, as of 2016, the 45-64 age group made up the largest share of the trade area’s population (32%) followed by 20-44 (32%), 0-19 (17%) and 65+ (18%) – see Figure 1. Note that due to rounding, age distribution figures may not add up to exactly 100%. Over the next five years, the trade area’s population is expected to age, with the 65+ population projected to increase by 15%, to nearly a quarter of the total trade area population. During this time, all other age groups are projected to decline in population. This aging trend may suggest a need for housing, transportation, and medical options that meet the demands of an older population, including improved non-motorized transportation options and easy access to goods and services.

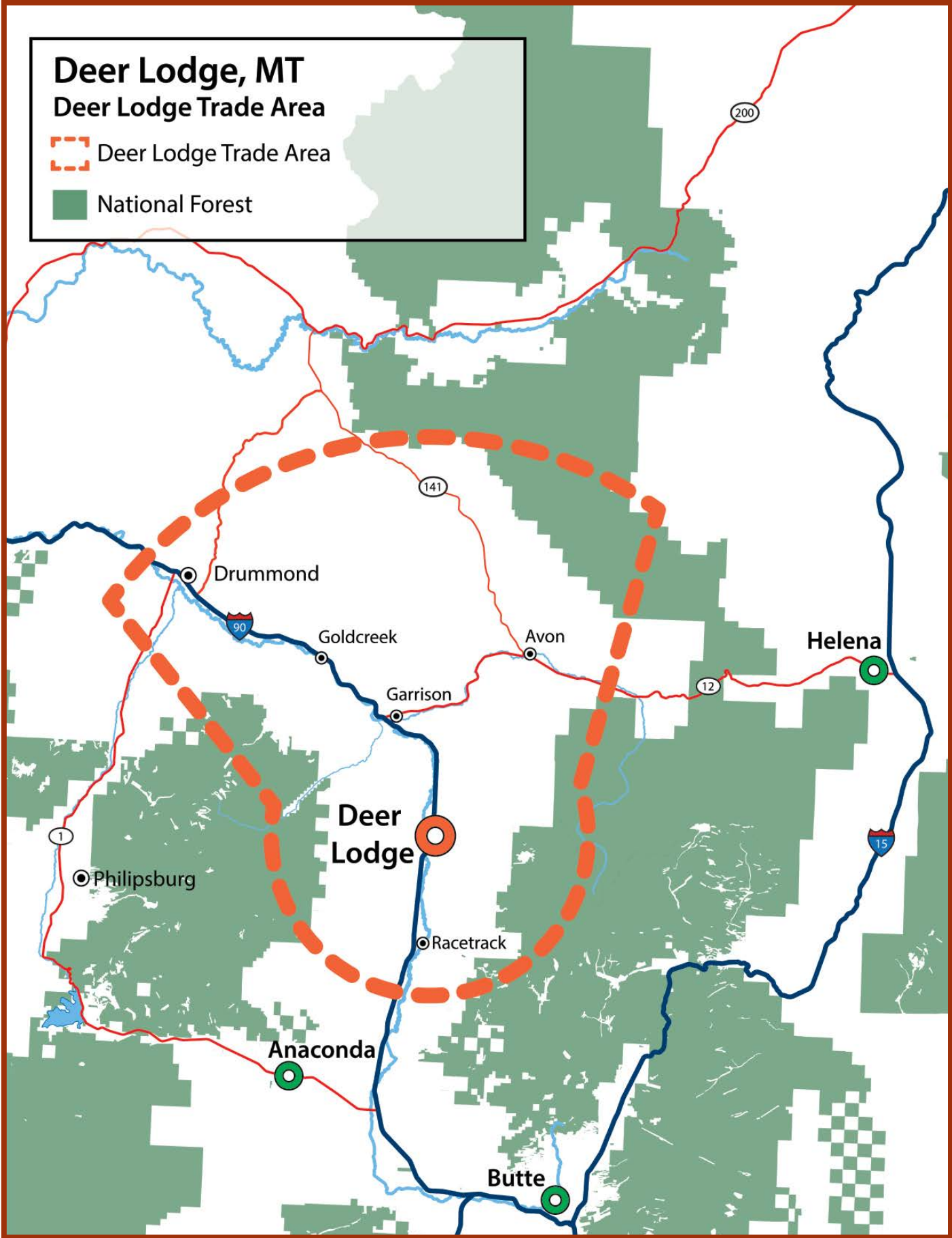
Table 1 - Demographic Indicators

	2010	2016	2021
Population	7,145	7,069	6,959
Households	2,463	2,455	2,423
Families	1,592	1,559	1,526
Median Age	44.6	45.3	45.9

Figure 1 - Age Distribution

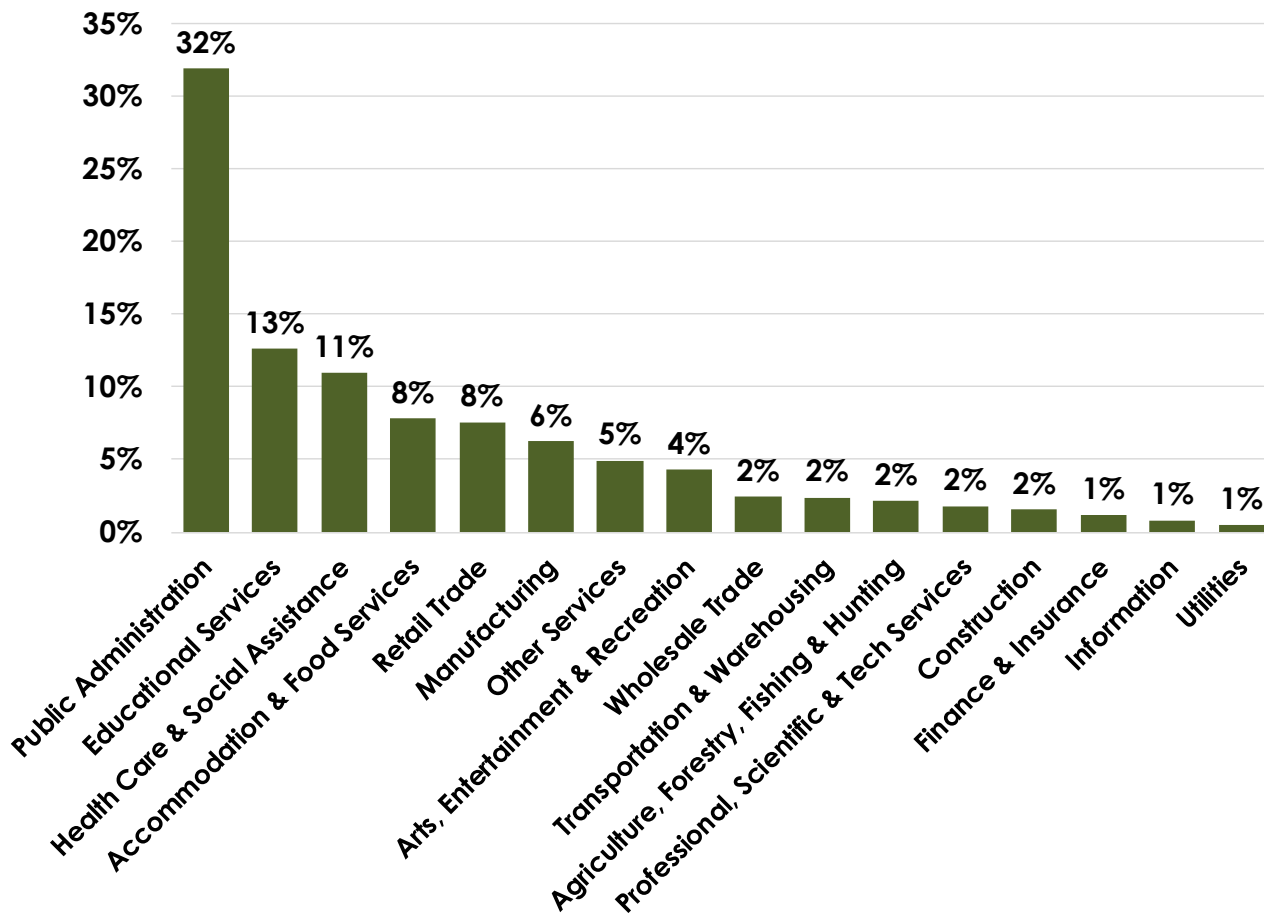


Map 2 - Deer Lodge Trade Area



As can be seen in Figure 2 the industries employing the most people in the trade area are public administration, educational services, health care, accommodation and food services, retail, and manufacturing. The 2016 unemployment rate in Powell County (trade area figures not available) was 5%, slightly higher than the unemployment rate for Montana which was 4.1% for 2016. However, Powell County’s unemployment rate is down from its ten-year high in 2009 of 9.1%. In terms of income, the median household income on the Deer Lodge trade area is \$40,571 which is lower than that of the state at \$47,169.

Figure 2 - Industry Employment



Retail Trade Analysis

To better understand Deer Lodge’s downtown economy, a retail trade analysis was completed using ESRI Business Analyst Online, which provides custom market analyses using extensive demographic, consumer expenditure, and business data from a variety of public and private sources. This analysis will identify two things:



1. Industries within Deer Lodge trade area experiencing retail leakage, and
2. Industries within Deer Lodge trade area experiencing retail surplus.

The retail trade analysis gives insight into what sectors of the economy have the potential to expand in downtown Deer Lodge and provides the basis for further study. It provides a window into which industries in the trade area are under-performing and over-performing. Under-performing industries represent opportunity to grow within the trade area, while over-performing sectors represent sectors of the economy where Deer Lodge is perhaps out competing other markets or attracting tourism.

Retail Supply and Demand

The retail market analysis compares total local sales (supply) with total consumer expenditures (demand) of residents in the Deer Lodge trade area to identify whether industries are experiencing a retail leakage or surplus. Retail leakage occurs when consumers are making purchases outside of the trade area, indicating that the supply of locally available retail goods is inadequate or that prices are not competitive enough to meet local demand. Retail leakage represents opportunity in the local economy; areas where businesses could theoretically expand or where new businesses could open. Retail surplus occurs when sales are greater than local consumer demand. A surplus signifies that the trade area is attracting outside spending. This is good because it most likely means people from outside the area, likely tourists, are spending money in Deer Lodge.

As can be seen in Table 2, the Deer Lodge trade area is experiencing a retail leakage (the gap between retail sales and demand) of \$20,881,919, for the sum of industry categories analyzed. This makes sense in that the online marketplace and competing retail markets in Butte, Anaconda, Helena, and Missoula likely attract customers from the trade area due to the fact that they have a greater diversity of goods and services to choose from. As a result, potential customers likely choose to drive a bit further (or order online) to take care of their shopping and other needs in one trip.

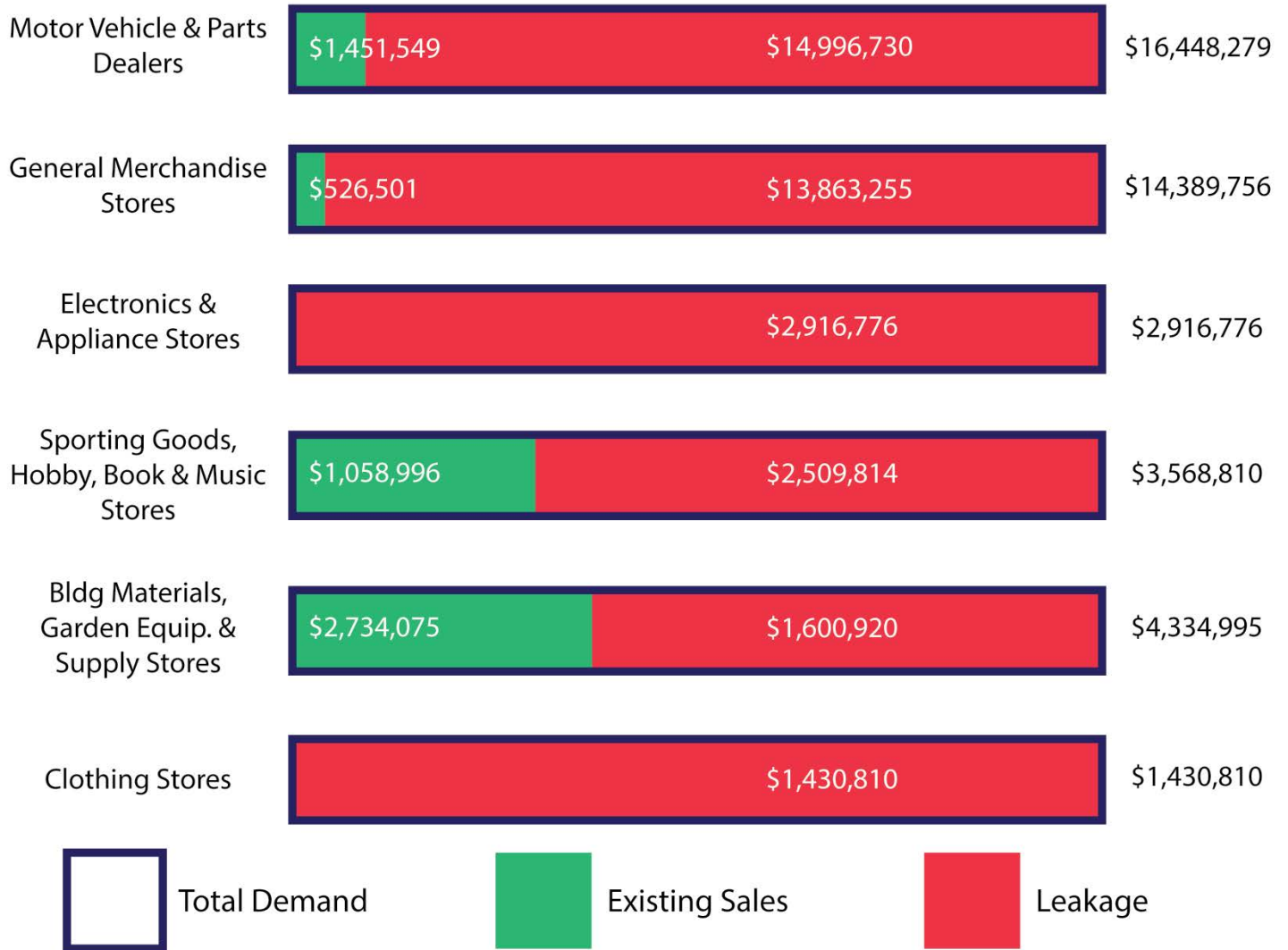


Table 2 - Retail Market Analysis

Industry	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$16,448,279	\$1,451,549	\$14,996,730
General Merchandise Stores	\$14,389,756	\$526,501	\$13,863,255
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$2,916,776	\$0	\$2,916,776
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$3,568,810	\$1,058,996	\$2,509,814
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$4,334,995	\$2,734,075	\$1,600,920
Clothing Stores	\$1,430,810	\$0	\$1,430,810
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$1,942,435	\$578,438	\$1,363,997
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$1,733,163	\$482,850	\$1,250,313
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$702,241	\$51,947	\$650,294
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$550,053	\$0	\$550,053
Specialty Food Stores	\$589,696	\$342,476	\$247,220
Shoe Stores	\$204,418	\$0	\$204,418
Florists	\$190,918	\$0	\$190,918
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$3,699,007	\$3,600,152	\$98,855
Special Food Services	\$51,069	\$0	\$51,069
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$433,064	\$472,007	-\$38,943
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	\$5,872,627	\$6,322,220	-\$449,593
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$326,421	\$997,190	-\$670,769
Grocery Stores	\$9,296,804	\$10,008,271	-\$711,467
Used Merchandise Stores	\$470,439	\$1,513,849	-\$1,043,410
Nonstore Retailers	\$412,644	\$1,850,147	-\$1,437,503
Gasoline Stations	\$6,014,066	\$22,705,904	-\$16,691,838
Total	\$75,578,491	\$54,696,572	\$20,881,919

Nevertheless, the Deer Lodge trade area is experiencing a retail surplus in several industry categories including grocery stores, used merchandise stores, bars, restaurants, and gas stations. However, there are far more industries experiencing a retail leakage in the Deer Lodge trade area. The industries experiencing the greatest amount of leakage are shown in Figure 3. This indicates there is demand for these kinds of businesses in Deer Lodge and possibly in the downtown area. The table below is the full outcome of the retail market analysis. The demand column represents the amount of sales the trade area could support. The supply column represents

Figure 3 - Industries Experiencing Greatest Retail Leakage



the amount of sales occurring in each industry sector. The retail gap column is the difference between demand and supply. A negative number means that industry is outperforming what the trade area should support, suggesting people from outside the trade area are spending money in Deer Lodge. A positive number represents retail leakage, suggesting people are spending money outside the trade area, and indicating an opportunity for growth. It is important to note that in a community as small as Deer Lodge the data have limitations and should be analyzed for trends instead of specific numbers.

Land Use

For purposes of Deer Lodge’s Downtown Master Plan, downtown

has been broadly defined as “interchange to interchange,” encompassing three distinct planning areas. Below is a brief description of land uses in these three planning areas.

Downtown Planning Area

The downtown planning area comprises the core of downtown Deer Lodge, extending along Main Street from Higgins Avenue on the north end to Conley Avenue on the south, and extending two blocks to the east and west. Land uses in the center of the downtown planning area are primarily commercial along Main Street, with first floor retail, office space, restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues. The northern portion of the downtown planning area is comprised of single family housing mixed in with commercial uses, while the southern end also has a mix of single family housing as well as the Old Prison and Auto Museums. The downtown planning area encompasses the six-block Deer Lodge Central Business Historic District – stretching along Main Street between Cottonwood Avenue and Montana Avenue – which is the original platted town site of Deer Lodge and is included in the National Register of Historic Places. The district contains 45 structures, with initial construction from 1884 to 1957, which contribute to the historic qualities of downtown. The historic district possesses many elements of good urban form – storefronts abutting the sidewalk, complete sidewalks, and visual appeal of the numerous historic buildings. Because of this, the historic district is an inviting place for residents and visitors alike to stop and stroll. Despite the quality of the historic district, there are also several elements of the downtown planning area which detract from its appeal – vacant storefronts, lack of public art, wide pedestrian crossings on Main Street, limited landscaping, and rundown building facades as well as some that are out of character with adjacent historic buildings.



North Side Planning Area

The north side planning area extends from the northern I-90 interchange south to California Avenue. Land uses in the north side planning area are primarily single-family residential and auto-oriented commercial, including gas stations, accommodations, the medical center, and restaurants. The north side planning area also





encompasses Grant-Kohrs ranch, and its network of trails, as well as the Powell County Fairgrounds. The north side planning area serves as the primary gateway for residents and visitors entering Deer Lodge from I-90. The City and community members have commented on the lack of visual appeal in this area and have expressed interest in creating gateway art and/or signage, as well as coherent landscaping, as an entrance to downtown.

South Side Planning Area

The south side planning area extends from Conley Avenue on the north to the southern I-90 interchange. Land uses in the south side planning area are primarily residential, open space, and industrial. The south side planning area includes the Sun Mountain Lumber Company as well as Arrowstone Park. Arrowstone Park has been identified as one of the key assets of downtown as it provides nearby recreational opportunities in a natural setting. Arrowstone Park contains a network of meandering paths, a disc-golf course, picnic areas, and views of the Flint Creek Mountain Range.



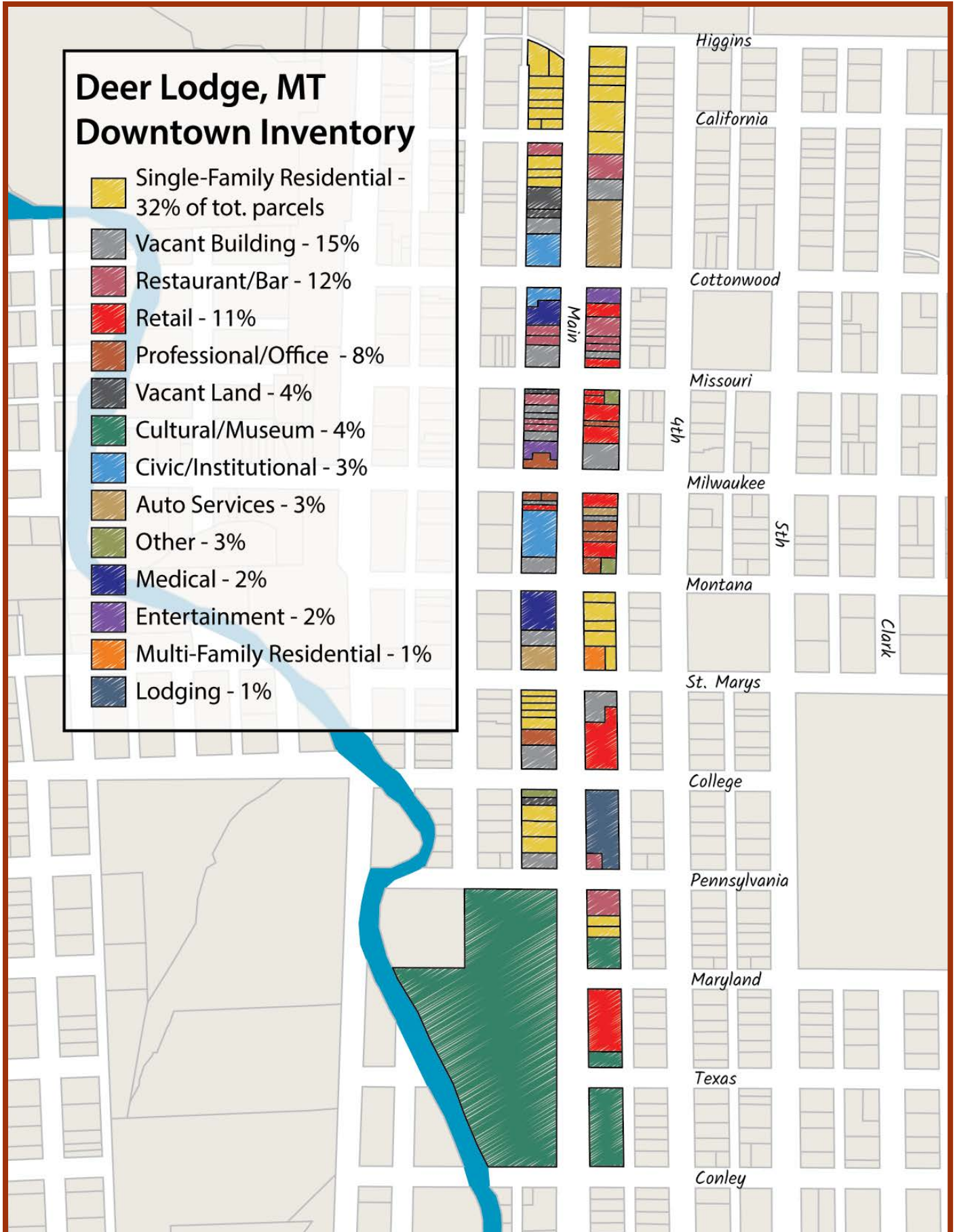
Downtown Inventory

As part of the data gathering phase of the downtown plan, an inventory of existing ground floor uses was performed to gain an understanding of the business mix in downtown. Because Main Street is the commercial heart of Downtown Deer Lodge, the inventory was conducted for business on Main Street between Higgins Avenue and Conley Avenue, totaling 101 unique parcels. Map 3 displays the results of the inventory in its entirety.

On a parcel basis, the predominant use in the area inventoried is single-family residential, though this is due to higher concentrations of residential on the northern and southern boundaries. Outside of residential, the dominant ground floor use is vacant buildings, restaurants/bars, retail, and professional office space. When looking at the downtown core (between Cottonwood Avenue and Montana Avenue), there is a greater concentration of retail, restaurants/bars, and entertainment venues which enhances the draw of downtown for residents and visitors. One of the greatest strengths of Downtown Deer Lodge is the fact that the majority of businesses inventoried are locally owned, with several having garnered interest



Map 3 - Downtown Inventory





outside of Deer Lodge for the quality of their products and visual appeal. Additionally, several buildings downtown have second story residences, which is beneficial to the health of downtown, as these residents can serve as a reliable customer base for downtown businesses.

During the inventory, the following themes were observed concerning the mix of uses in and form of Downtown Deer Lodge.

- Pedestrian-oriented retail is concentrated in the historic district between Cottonwood Avenue and Montana Avenue, with heavier concentration on the east side of Main Street.
- The high concentration of vacant store fronts on the west side of Main Street between Cottonwood Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue disrupts the pedestrian flow and visual appeal of Main Street.
- Bars are concentrated between Cottonwood Avenue and Milwaukee Avenue.
- The walk from Montana Avenue to the Old Prison Museum (Pennsylvania Avenue) feels uninviting in places due in part to large parking lots abutting the street, a lack of landscaping, and a lack of visual indicators connecting downtown with the Museum.



Opportunities for Vacant Properties

The high number of vacant buildings represents both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, many of these vacancies are ready to be rented, providing ample space to accommodate current and future residents looking to start a business at rents that are lower than larger urban centers in Montana and across the region. Other vacancies, especially in the historic district, are old store fronts that have not been occupied for several years. While not available for rent immediately, with a little fixing up inside and out, these vacancies could quickly become appealing future homes for businesses looking to occupy prime downtown real estate. At the very least, fixing up the facades and interiors of these storefronts will help improve the visual appeal of downtown, presenting the image to residents and visitors that Deer Lodge has pride in its downtown.



On the other end of the spectrum are the vacant historic buildings in need of renovations, the primary example being the old Deer Lodge Hotel building. The Deer Lodge Hotel Preservation Group is currently working to restore the hotel and has been successful in securing grants for architectural work, though financing for the major structural renovations needed remains a question. Preservation and restoration of the Deer Lodge Hotel could be a boon for downtown Deer Lodge. The hotel sits at a key intersection of downtown and currently, despite its historic beauty, takes away from the visual continuity of downtown as it takes up such a large portion of the block and its first floor is boarded up. With full (or even partially full) occupancy, the Deer Lodge Hotel could serve as an anchor for downtown and greatly improve the visual aesthetic of downtown. However, the challenges with financing renovations and subsequently finding stable occupants are significant and will likely take several years to address.



In addition to vacant buildings, there were also several vacant parcels identified in downtown which could present opportunities for Deer Lodge to improve the appeal of downtown. One such opportunity is on the parcel located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Missouri Avenue – the current site of the train mural. As it sits in the heart of downtown, this parcel could be the perfect location for a pocket park, or plaza, with areas to sit, people watch, and grab lunch. The property is privately owned so creation of a city park would require the City of Deer Lodge to purchase it from the land owner, should that be an option. Other opportunities for downtown gathering spaces might include those areas that are currently privately owned, but underutilized, such as a parking lot adjacent to a vacant building.



Transportation

Interstate 90 is the primary transportation artery providing access to Deer Lodge. Having I-90 run through Deer Lodge is both a blessing and curse. It is beneficial for Deer Lodge in that it provides easy access to larger markets and brings thousands of travelers through Deer Lodge every day. It is a challenge in the sense that it can be difficult to attract pass-through visitors into downtown as





their only view of town is from the freeway at high speeds. Most people enter downtown from the northern I-90 interchange and travel south along Main Street which also serves as a state highway. Downtown, and the surrounding residential neighborhoods, are set up in a grid pattern, which provides for a well-connected and easy to navigate street network.

Parking

Available parking in downtown is primarily on-street with several small private off-street parking lots scattered along Main Street and Second Street. On-street parking along Main Street is parallel while the side avenues have diagonal parking. On-street parking along Main Street is free with no time limits. Deer Lodge business owners and residents have expressed a need for more parking in downtown, especially during summer months when more people tend to visit downtown. While too much surface parking can detract from the aesthetic of downtown, customers of downtown businesses also need a place to park. The reasons for downtown parking congestion can vary from downtown residents and employees parking on-street for extended durations, to the simple fact that customer demand for parking outweighs parking supply. Regardless of the reason, a real, or perceived, lack of available on-street parking in downtown can serve to discourage potential customers from choosing to do business in downtown.



Non-Motorized Transportation

Deer Lodge's non-motorized transportation network includes both off-street paths as well as sidewalks. Sidewalks run the length of Main Street from Higgins Avenue south to Conley Avenue. The residential neighborhood east of downtown has largely complete sidewalks while the mixed-use neighborhood west of downtown has intermittent gaps in the sidewalk network. The City recently applied for a Transportation Alternatives grant for sidewalk repairs and Americans with Disabilities Act compliant crossings on Main Street. As for paths, Grant-Kohrs ranch has a network of paths extending to the north and west of the site, which are accessed from the Grant-Kohrs parking lot. South of town, Arrowstone Park has a network of paths along the Clark Fork River which extend



north to Pennsylvania Avenue near the Old Prison Museum. While Deer Lodge has a fairly robust non-motorized transportation network, needed improvements include adding wayfinding signage and developing better connections to trails in Arrowstone Park and Grant-Kohrs.

Main Street Design

As the heart of downtowns, Main Streets should serve as a pleasing and inviting space for residents and visitors to stop, interact, and shop in local businesses. Deer Lodge’s Main Street has many elements that serve to invite the pedestrian activity critical to the success of any downtown - complete sidewalks, unique local businesses, and appealing historic buildings framing Main Street. While Main Street serves as a pedestrian corridor and public space, it is also a state highway and must efficiently move vehicles to and from the freeway, including trucks leaving and entering the Sun Mountain Lumber Company. What has transpired in Deer Lodge is a Main Street that is 74-feet wide with two travel lanes in each direction. The resulting design is stark, uninviting for pedestrians, and not in context with the surrounding buildings. A majority of public meeting participants and survey respondents noted the design of Main Street as a challenge for Deer Lodge, from its appearance to its width.



Part III - Action Plan



Deer Lodge’s Downtown Master Plan is intended to be an actionable and achievable document that is implemented over time to achieve the City’s vision for downtown. The action plan serves as the heart of this document and provides detailed guidance for putting the plan into action. The objectives and actions strategies below provide the City with a framework for how to move forward. Each action strategy includes a detailed description as well as partnering organizations, a timeline for how long each action will generally take to implement and a priority ranking. Below is a more thorough description of the additional rows under each action.

Partners

Recognizing that implementation will require working with other agencies and organizations, the partners row identifies the parties likely to play key roles in implementation of each action. Partners are identified using the following acronyms.

CDL – City of Deer Lodge

DEQ – Montana Department of Environmental Quality

DNRC – Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

GKR – Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site

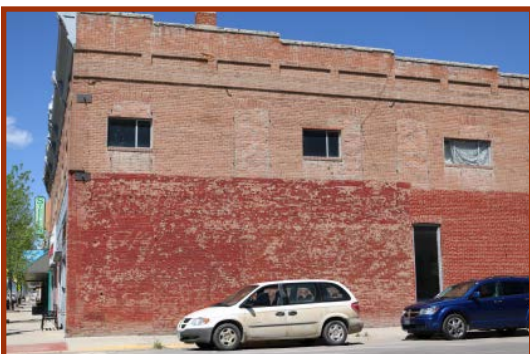
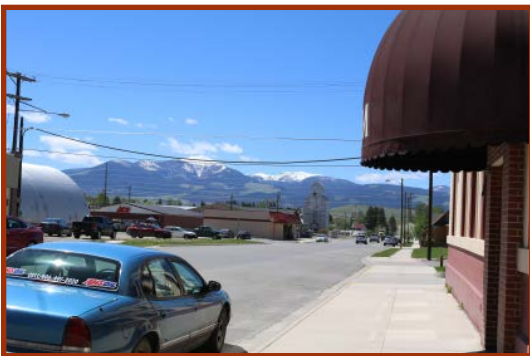
MDT – Montana Department of Transportation

MSP – Montana State Prison

OPM - Old Prison Museum

PC – Powell County

PCC – Powell County Chamber of Commerce



Priority

The priority row under each action is intended to be used as a tool for prioritizing the allocation of limited resources. The priority

rankings are a reflection of where the City should be investing its time and resources. As resources are limited, implementation of each action will be incumbent upon availability of staff and funding. Priority rankings are organized as follows:

1. High Priority
2. Medium priority
3. Lower priority but still important; implementation will be contingent upon available resources

The priority rankings serve to identify where to begin in implementing this plan. For instance, an action with a long-term timeline but a high priority ranking indicates that action will likely take an extended period of time to complete but that initiation of that action should begin as soon as possible.

Timeline

The timeline row under each action below outlines, generally, the expected amount of time each action will take to implement. Timelines are organized in the following manner:

- *Short-term*: will take 1 year to 3 years to implement from start to finish.
- *Mid-term*: will take 3 years to 5 years to implement from start to finish.
- *Long-term*: will take more than 5 years to implement from start to finish.
- *On-Going*: implementation will occur continually



Transportation

The transportation section of the action plan takes a broad approach to transportation improvements for all travel modes. Main Street in Deer Lodge is a safe and efficient road for vehicles but the road could do more to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. Beyond safety considerations, accommodating cyclists and pedestrians is an important factor to creating a successful downtown as it can serve to attract additional traffic that is traveling at slower speeds and may be more inclined to stop and patronize local businesses. Furthermore, everyone is a pedestrian at one point and making the pedestrian experience safer and more enjoyable can encourage people to stay downtown for longer durations.

The transportation actions detailed below also address vehicle access in downtown. New businesses opening up on Main Street have increased demand for parking downtown, requiring a variety of approaches to more effectively utilizing parking capacity for Main Street Businesses. A well-designed transportation system that provides convenient access and accommodates all modes of transportation is a critical component to the success of downtown, as it serves as the primary means for how people arrive in and interact with downtown. The actions outlined below provide both short and long-term solutions for improving the transportation system in downtown Deer Lodge.

Objective 1: Redesign Main Street to be more in context with the small downtown atmosphere of Deer Lodge.

<p>Action 1.1</p>	<p>Engage the Montana Department of Transportation on redesigning Main Street. Throughout the development of this plan, Deer Lodge residents and business owners expressed strong interest in redesigning Main Street. Common interests expressed regarding a redesign of Main Street have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Main Street more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. • Slowing vehicular traffic. • Improving the visual appeal and making the design of Main Street more in context with surrounding buildings. • Increasing parking capacity. <p>As Main Street is a state highway any redesign option will require approval from and coordination with MDT. As part of the planning process MDT representatives were consulted regarding options for redesigning Main Street. MDT has expressed willingness to work with Deer Lodge on identifying a solution for redesigning Main Street that addresses the community’s interests while also meeting MDT’s standards and needs.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>MDT</p>
<p>Priority</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Short-term</p>



Objective 2: Develop a Complete and Connected Non-Motorized Transportation Network

<p>Action 2.1</p>	<p>Develop a trail system through the City owned property northwest of downtown on the Clark Fork River, connecting Milwaukee Avenue with the Grant-Kohrs trail system. Grant-Kohrs Ranch sits less than a mile north of downtown Deer Lodge and is visited by over 20,000 people every year¹. Through the development of this plan residents and business owners expressed an interest in attracting these visitors to downtown as many of them either leave Deer Lodge after their visit or drive right through downtown on their way to the Old Prison Museum. A trail adjacent to the river connecting Milwaukee Avenue with the Grant-Kohrs trails system would provide a short and pleasant option for Grant-Kohrs visitors to walk to downtown. Additionally, this trail would serve as a valuable recreation opportunity for Deer Lodge residents and be the kind of amenity that attracts new residents and businesses to the City. The development of such a trail would likely be a part of a larger park planning effort for the river front area to identify trail alignment, amenities, and access – see action 6.1. Development of the trail will require coordination with Grant-Kohrs Ranch on connecting with their trails system as well as the Montana Department of Environmental Quality on any needed soil remediation in the area around the Clark Fork River. It may also be necessary to work with the Powell County Parks Board to coordinate trail development and alignment with their plans for Arrowstone Park and Trestle Park. Potential funding opportunities for development of a trail include the Federal Lands Access Program, the Recreational Trails Program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and/or the Natural Resource Damage Program.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>CDL, GKR, PC</p>
<p>Priority</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Long-term</p>

Action 2.2	<p>Create a pedestrian and bicyclist connection on Pennsylvania Avenue linking Main Street with the Arrowstone Park trail system. The northern entrance/exit point for the Arrowstone Park trail system is at the western end of Pennsylvania Avenue. This location of Pennsylvania Avenue has no sidewalk and little indication that this is the start of the trail system or that by continuing walking east trail users can connect with Main Street. By installing a clear pathway along Pennsylvania Avenue, the City can create a more seamless connection between Main Street and the Arrowstone Park trail system. In order for this to be effective it would likely need to be coupled with wayfinding signage located at Pennsylvania Avenue’s intersection with Main Street and the Arrowstone Park Trail. As this section of road has low traffic volumes and speeds, there are many options for the City of Deer Lodge, ranging from installing a sidewalk (which would be more costly) to pavement markings and landscaping to indicate the continuation of the path, which would be less costly and easier to implement.</p>
Partners	CDL, PC
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 2.3	<p>Develop a plan for installing wayfinding signs directing people to attractions in and adjacent to downtown. Wayfinding refers to the use of informational signage to guide people through Deer Lodge and enhance their experience in the city. The City of Deer Lodge and its surroundings have several attractions for both residents and visitors including downtown, Grant Kohrs Ranch, the Old Prison Museum, and Arrowstone Park. Wayfinding will help effectively guide visitors to these attractions. Wayfinding can be effective in highlighting destinations visitors may not be aware of as well as increasing foot traffic through downtown as visitors realize the relative close proximity of destinations in and around Deer Lodge. Figure 4 shows a conceptual image of what a wayfinding sign might look like in Deer Lodge. Developing a wayfinding program typically entails creating a wayfinding plan to identify a consistent theme and design for signs, where signs will be located, and what destinations to highlight. If signs will be placed within the right-of-way of Main Street (a state highway), MDT will need to be consulted to ensure signs meet the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and MDT standards. Potential funding sources for developing and implementing a wayfinding plan include the CDBG program, Montana Main Street Program, and/or Montana Office of Tourism Grants. For implementation, the City could reach out to the Montana State Prison’s sign shop about creating the wayfinding signs.</p>
Partners	CDL, PCC, MDT, MSP
Priority	1
Timeline	Long-term

Figure 4 - Conceptual Wayfinding Sign in Deer Lodge



Action 2.4	Install bike racks on Main Street in downtown. Bike racks can help to make downtown more bike friendly with the hope of encouraging more bike trips. In addition, bike racks can also serve as public art if they are designed in a way to highlight Deer Lodge’s brand or locally identified image. For the development of bike racks the City could reach out to the Anaconda Job Corps’ welding program or the Montana State Prison to assist with fabrication at a lower cost than buying off-the-shelf bike racks.
Partners	CDL, downtown property owners, Anaconda Job Corps, Montana State Prison
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 2.5	Install high-visibility cross-walks at Main Street intersections in downtown. High visibility crosswalks encourage pedestrians to walk at preferred crossing locations and increase driver awareness of pedestrians at crossings. As Main Street is a state highway, MDT would likely be charged with installation of crosswalks. Therefore, the City will need to reach out to MDT about the process for repainting crosswalks on Main Street in the near term. If near term installation is not possible, the addition of crosswalks could possibly be included as part of a larger repaving or redesign project on Main Street.
Partners	MDT
Priority	3
Timeline	Short-term

Action 2.6	<p>Install a bike lane along the length of Main Street. Bike lanes provide a safe travel option for cyclists and can serve to encourage people to bike who may feel unsafe riding where no safe facilities exist. Currently, Deer Lodge has limited dedicated bike facilities. However, much of Deer Lodge’s residential streets are bike friendly as they are low volume and low speed roads. Main Street however, has higher volumes and speeds coupled with the fact that there is less room for cyclists to ride safely. A bike lane running the length of Main Street from interchange to interchange would provide a safe travel option for cyclists and could serve to encourage more residents to ride. Additionally, bike lanes serve to visually narrow the travel lane which may help in reducing vehicle speeds on Main Street. On the northern end of Main Street where no sidewalks exist (north of Rainbow Avenue), a shared use path may be appropriate to provide a safe travel option for pedestrians as well. This would have the added benefit of providing a non-motorized connection between downtown and the fairgrounds, Grant-Kohrs, and Indian Creek Campground. On the southern end of Main Street a bike lane could connect with the Arrowstone Park trail system. A bike lane on Main Street will require coordination with and approval from MDT. For funding the City could again apply for a transportation alternatives grant.</p>
Partners	CDL, MDT, PC
Priority	2
Timeline	Mid-term

Action 2.7	<p>Work with Powell County on implementing the Deer Lodge Valley Trails Plan. The Deer Lodge Valley Trails Plan looks at establishing a network of trails between Racetrack and Garrison and includes recommendations for the City of Deer Lodge as well. The plan also calls for developing additional park and trail amenities including fishing access sites which would help attract additional visitors to Deer Lodge and patrons to downtown businesses. Implementation of the plan will likely take place over many years as it will require acquiring easements and/or the purchase of property for trail development. Nevertheless, if implemented a valley-wide trail system, and accompanying amenities, would put Deer Lodge on the map as a destination for biking and fishing in western Montana.</p>
Partners	CDL, PC
Priority	1
Timeline	Ongoing

Action 2.8	Install safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings outside of downtown on Main Street and at other areas with bicycle and pedestrian traffic. There are currently few safe pedestrian crossings on Main Street outside of downtown, where vehicles tend to drive at higher speeds. The installation of pedestrian crossings on Main Street north and south of downtown will improve pedestrian safety by alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrians, which is especially important during times of low light and for children, seniors, and individuals with a disability. Safe pedestrian crossings can take many forms, from a traditional cross-walk to a cross-walk with a rapid flashing beacon which includes a pedestrian crossing sign and blinking lights when activated by the push of a button. Pedestrian crossings are needed north of downtown along the stretch of Main Street between Grant-Kohrs and the Powell County Fairgrounds and south of downtown between both sides of Arrowstone Park. An additional safe crossing may also be needed for accessing the new Johnson Creek Trail extension. Installation of pedestrian crossings will require working with MDT as Main Street is a state highway.
Partners	CDL, MDT, PC
Priority	1
Timeline	Short-term

Action 2.9	Work with MDT on slowing down traffic on Main Street. Throughout the development of this plan, Deer Lodge residents voiced interest in reducing vehicle speeds on Main Street, both inside and outside downtown. While the speed limit on Main Street is 25 M.P.H. through downtown, and 35 M.P.H. outside downtown, the design of the roadway is such that vehicles tend to drive faster than the posted speed limit. There are a variety of tools available for slowing down traffic in areas where operating speeds are higher than the posted speed limit. One tool that has proven to be effective is the speed feedback sign, which displays the speed at which a vehicle is traveling. Whatever the option, coordination with, and approval from, MDT will be required as Main Street is a state highway.
Partners	CDL, MDT, PC
Priority	1
Timeline	Mid-term

Objective 3: Ensure Adequate Parking Capacity is Available Downtown

Action 3.1	Paint parallel parking stalls/lines on Main Street. As cars come and go throughout the day, blocks on Main Street may be left with large gaps between cars that are not quite big enough to park a car in. This results in an inefficient use of on-street parking capacity. Painting lines on Main Street, indicating where vehicles are intended to park, will help in making more efficient use of existing parking supply.
Partners	CDL, MDT, PCC, downtown property owners
Priority	1
Timeline	Short-term

Action 3.2	Explore buying or leasing vacant lots adjacent to downtown for parking. There are several vacant lots on 2nd street adjacent to downtown. To increase off-street parking capacity for downtown business the City could approach the owners of these properties on whether they would be willing to sell or lease these properties for off-street parking. To be effective this would require parking signage on Main Street to direct people to off-street parking lots.
Partners	CDL, MDT, PCC, downtown property owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Long-term

Objective 4: Provide Convenient Access to Downtown

Action 4.1	Work with the Montana Department of Transportation on planning and constructing a west bound on-ramp at the southern I-90 interchange. The southern I-90 interchange in Deer Lodge provides access for I-90 travelers to enter downtown Deer Lodge from the south and allows vehicles traveling south out of Deer Lodge to access I-90 eastbound. However, there is not an on-ramp for accessing I-90 westbound lanes. Deer Lodge residents and business owners have expressed interest in the construction of a westbound I-90 on-ramp in this location to provide for greater access to downtown. Construction of an on-ramp would fall under the purview of MDT and require federal funding. Given current transportation funding constraints at the state and federal levels, this project is unlikely to happen in the near term. Nevertheless, the City should reach out to MDT to explore the feasibility of a westbound on-ramp in the future.
Partners	CDL, PC, MDT
Priority	3
Timeline	Long term

Appearance

The appearance of a community is critically important to not only attracting investment in downtown and but also establishing community pride and attracting visitors and new residents. Visual appearance of a community informs visitors' impressions of a place and may influence their decision on whether to return or tell a friend to visit. For downtown Deer Lodge, this means creating spaces that are attractive, welcoming, and accessible. An attractive and well-kept downtown conveys a message that the community cares about its image and is committed to maintaining the economic viability of its downtown. The appearance of Deer Lodge is by no means unappealing. The historic buildings, mountain views, and well-maintained parks all provide a positive image of the City and downtown. At the same time opportunities exist to better showcase the City's assets while trying to address factors that take away from the outward of appearance of Deer Lodge.

Objective 5: Enliven and Promote Vacant Downtown Properties

Action 5.1	<p>Work with downtown property owners on filling vacant storefronts with window displays – local art, community events, highlighting local groups, etc. Vacant storefronts on any Main Street projects an image of decline and emptiness which can serve to discourage investment from potential business owners looking to open up shop. By filling vacant storefronts with window displays, Deer Lodge can not only improve the aesthetics of downtown but also provide a space for local artists and community groups to showcase their work. In addition, window displays can serve to highlight and market a property to potential tenants or buyers. While this action will not single handedly spark reinvestment in Deer Lodge, it will serve as one of many small low-cost actions to enhance the image of downtown. The desired outcome being more people taking an interest in downtown, visitors stopping to stroll and shop along Main Street, and a spark of reinvestment.</p>
Partners	CDL, PCC, downtown property owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 5.2	<p>Work with owners of vacant downtown commercial properties on their interest to offer short term or seasonal “pop up” leases. Pop-up leases offer flexible lease terms ranging from a few days to a year, with rates generally lower than ordinary commercial leases. Pop-up leases benefit landlords because some rent is better than no rent and they can also serve to attract more customers to downtown as a once empty storefront becomes open for business. This approach could be used to offer small business owners a chance to reach a wider market during summer months and the winter holiday shopping season.</p>
Partners	CDL, PCC, downtown property owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term

Objective 6: Develop and maintain quality public spaces in and adjacent to downtown

Action 6.1	<p>Develop a plan for a park on the 13 acres of City owned land northwest of downtown and adjacent to the Clark Fork River. The 13-acre piece of City owned land northwest of downtown on the east side of the Clark Fork river presents an opportunity for Deer Lodge to create a treasured community asset adjacent to downtown. Few communities are fortunate enough to own such a prime piece of real estate that connects the natural beauty of a riparian river system with the atmosphere of a small downtown. A Clark Fork River park in Deer Lodge could include a trail system, natural areas for wildlife, a bandshell, ball fields, or any number of amenities. The options are many, but first the City needs to develop a vision and plan for a Clark Fork River park that identifies what level of remediation is needed, desired amenities, what the wildlife and aquatic needs are, where access points will be located, and how to fund improvements. People and businesses are increasingly putting added value on easy access to natural amenities when choosing where to move or open up. A quality river front park is just the kind of amenity that could set Deer Lodge apart and attract people and businesses looking for a community that prioritizes its natural assets. Potential funding sources for developing a plan for a Clark Fork River park include the Montana Main Street Program and the Community Development Block Grant Program.</p>
Partners	CDL
Priority	1
Timeline	Mid-Term
Action 6.2	<p>Work with Powell County on implementing the Arrowstone Park Master Plan. Arrowstone Park is a valuable recreation asset to the community of Deer Lodge providing opportunities for walking and biking, bird watching, disc golfing, picnicking, and fishing. While not located in City limits, the City of Deer Lodge owns much of Arrowstone Park. The park benefits both Deer Lodge residents and downtown as it serves as yet another attraction in Deer Lodge. The Arrowstone Park Master Plan includes a wide range of proposed improvements including the installation of a boat launch, trail extensions, interpretive signage, and a host of other projects that will further enhance the quality of Arrowstone Park. Recognizing the benefit Arrowstone Park provides to the Deer Lodge community, the City should work with Powell County, as resources allow, on implementing the Arrowstone Park Master Plan.</p>
Partners	CDL, PC
Priority	1
Timeline	Ongoing

Action 6.3	Develop a pocket park at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Missouri Avenue. The currently vacant land at the southwest corner of the Main Street and Missouri Avenue intersection presents a unique opportunity to create an attractive public space in the heart of downtown. A pocket park could include attractive landscaping, areas for people to sit and socialize, and/or attractions for kids and families. Figures 5 and 6 show conceptual ideas of what a pocket park could look like in this location. There are few public spaces for people to congregate in downtown. The addition of a pocket park could serve to attract people of all ages to downtown and would also turn a vacant property into an eye-catching attraction at a key downtown intersection. As the property in question is privately owned the city will need to work with the private landowner on purchasing the property, prior to planning for improvements.
Partners	CDL, PCC, downtown property owners
Priority	1
Timeline	Mid-term

Figure 5 - Conceptual Pocket Park Design



Figure 6 - Conceptual Pocket Park Design

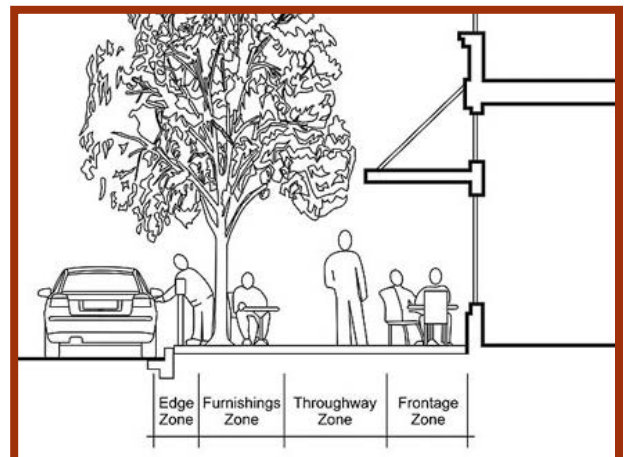


Action 6.4

Permit and encourage the use of sidewalk cafés. Sidewalk cafes can add vibrancy to downtown and present the image that Deer Lodge has an active and alive downtown. To do this, Deer Lodge could pass an ordinance permitting the use of sidewalks for downtown businesses. To implement this action safely, Deer Lodge will need to provide specific requirements for where seating can be located and during what hours. Deer Lodge will need to delineate sidewalk zones as shown in Figure 7 to ensure sidewalk seating does not interfere with pedestrian traffic and wheel chair users. Prior to implementation the City will also need to consult with MDT as Main Street sidewalks are located in highway right-of-way.

Partners	CDL, MDT, downtown business owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term

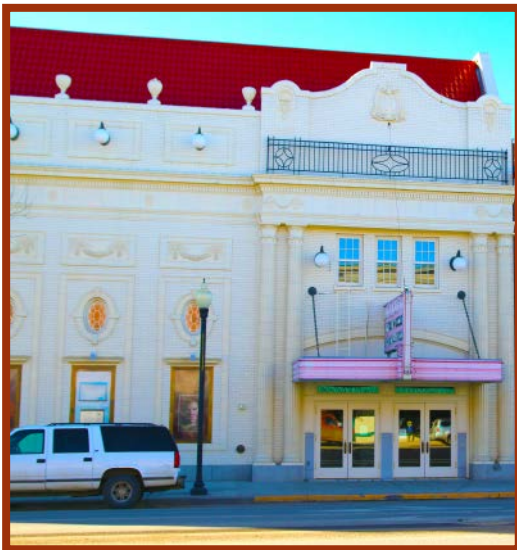
Figure 7 - Sidewalk Zones



Action 6.5	Explore additional recreation opportunities for youth. Downtown Deer Lodge and adjacent areas have few attractions for children and high school age kids. In order to attract a more diverse age groups to downtown the City should explore developing attractions for youth in and around downtown. Potential options include splash park for younger kids and/or a skate park for all ages.
Partners	CDL, PCC
Priority	2
Timeline	Long-term

Objective 7: Preserve and maintain historic buildings in downtown

Action 7.1	Establish historic design guidelines for the Deer Lodge Central Business Historic District. Historic design guidelines provide recommendations for building designs and aesthetics that preserve and enhance the historic qualities of buildings in a particular area. Examples can include guidance on building style, building materials and colors, minimum levels of transparency on building frontages (windows), maximum setbacks and/or certain types of awnings. The historic quality of buildings in downtown is one of Deer Lodge’s greatest assets and serves as an attraction for visitors and potential new residents and businesses. As the age of buildings in downtown Deer Lodge varies widely, guidelines for downtown would need to cover a variety of distinct architectural periods ranging from the late 19 th century up to the mid-20 th century. Historic design guidelines in Deer Lodge could be developed as part of an update to the City’s zoning and could be administered by the Deer Lodge Historic Preservation Board. To aid in implementation of guidelines the City could tie the guidelines to a façade improvement program as outline in action 7.2.
Partners	CDL, Historic Preservation Board, downtown property owners
Priority	1
Timeline	Short-term



Action 7.2	<p>Establish a façade improvement program. Façade improvement programs use financial incentives to encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts. Financial incentives can take the form of matching grants, loans, tax incentives, and/or design assistance. To implement a program in Deer Lodge the City could apply for a grant from the Montana Main Street Program to develop a façade improvement program. To ensure building improvements are done in accordance with set standards the City could make funding contingent upon meeting Deer Lodge’s to-be-developed historic design guidelines outlined in action 7.1. Depending on the success of the program, the City could choose to extend its life through the use of local funding sources and/or incentives.</p>
Partners	CDL, Historic Preservation Board, downtown property owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term



Action 7.3	<p>Support efforts to restore the Old Deer Lodge Hotel. The Old Deer Lodge Hotel sits in the heart of downtown and if restored and occupied could serve as anchor for the downtown business community. In recent years, Deer Lodge Preservation, Inc. has worked diligently to restore the hotel to its former glory. The group has been successful in securing a grant for a preliminary architecture report, which is vital to procuring additional grant monies. However, the cost of restoration is high; replacing the roof alone is estimated to cost approximately \$200,000. Additionally, finding stable and suitable tenants could be challenging. Nevertheless, the hotel is a focal point of downtown and if demolished would leave a hole in the heart of downtown. With a group committed to restoration already in place, the City should support efforts to restore the hotel and work with Deer Lodge Preservation, Inc. on identifying potential tenants that could realistically provide stable occupation and potentially assist in funding improvements.</p>
Partners	CDL, Deer Lodge Preservation, Inc., PCC
Priority	3
Timeline	Ongoing



Objective 8: Promote Public Art

Action 8.1	Create an iconic gateway art feature on the north end of town, leading into downtown. A large iconic art piece located strategically on the north end of Main Street could serve to attract people to downtown and leave a positive impression of Deer Lodge. Ideally the piece would be eye catching and reinforce Deer Lodge’s identity – trains, agriculture, access to outdoor recreation, etc. Figure 8 shows what a simple entrance sign might look like in Deer Lodge. Funding sources could range from grants from the Montana Arts Council, donations from local businesses and civic organizations, and/or, through crowd sourced funding via internet resources such as www.kickstarter.com .
Partners	CDL, MDT, PCC
Priority	High
Timeline	Short-term

Figure 8 - Conceptual Downtown Entrance Signage



Action 8.2	Work with local artists on forming a public art committee to promote more public art downtown – murals, sculptures, painted crosswalks, etc.
Partners	CDL, local artists
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term

Objective 9: Work on improving the outside appearance of downtown and adjacent areas

Action 9.1	Work on cleaning up dilapidated properties in and around downtown. Deer Lodge residents and business owners have voiced a need to clean up the appearance of the City. Several properties in the City are in varying states of disrepair and have junk accumulating. This presents an image of neglect to visitors and potential new residents and business owners. To begin cleaning up these properties the City needs to enforce its blight ordinance and work with property owners on taking steps to improve their appearance
Partners	CDL, local property owners
Priority	1
Timeline	Ongoing

Action 9.2	Organize an annual spring clean-up day. One way to assist property owners in improve the appearance of their properties is to organize a spring clean-up day. This would involve partnering with the local waste management providers to offer free city wide junk clean-up on one day in spring where residents and business owners can dispose of unwanted junk.
Partners	CDL, local waste management company
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 9.3	Develop detailed landscape requirements for downtown and the northern portion of Main Street. As southbound motorists enter downtown from I-90 they are met with areas that are stark and void of vegetation. One way to change this and improve the visual aesthetic of the gateway to downtown is to increase the amount of landscaping through the development of landscape requirements. Typically, landscape requirements require new developments to provide green spaces, trees, and/or shrubs based on the size of the development and its relation to the street. In Deer Lodge, landscaping requirements could be developed as part of an update to the City’s zoning code.
Partners	CDL, PC
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 9.4	Work with tavern owners on encouraging their customers to smoke in the alley or other locations off Main Street. Currently many tavern patrons in Deer Lodge use Main Street sidewalks as a cigarette smoking spot. This forces pedestrians, including children, to walk through clouds of smoke as they walk down the sidewalk. In order to lessen the health impacts associated with regular smoking on the sidewalk, Deer Lodge should engage local tavern owners on encouraging their customers to use the alley ways for smoking cigarettes.
Partners	CDL, PCC, local tavern owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 9.5	Establish a program for planting, maintaining, and replacing street trees on Main Street and key corridors (both north and south) leading to downtown.
Partners	CDL
Priority	2
Timeline	Mid-term

Economic Development

Local businesses are vital to the success of any small downtown. Customers are attracted to these places for their quality products, proximity to other goods and services, and the personal connection they provide. However, owning and operating a small downtown business is harder than ever, as consumers have an ever-expanding array of choices available through the online market-place and in nearby cities. One of the best strategies for growing the local economy is through preserving what is already there by supporting existing businesses. Downtown Deer Lodge has benefited recently from several small local businesses opening their doors. A key component to continue economic growth in downtown, and throughout Deer Lodge, is working with local businesses owners on how the City can support their needs while also identifying what factors may be needed to attract entrepreneurs to the City.

Objective 10: Support Local Business

Action 10.1	Organize a quarterly meeting with Deer Lodge downtown business owners where local business owners and community leaders can discuss challenges, needs, and opportunities for retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones.
Partners	CDL, PCC, local business owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Ongoing
Action 10.2	Work with Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development and the Montana Small Business Development Center to provide assistance to existing and new businesses.
Partners	CDL, PCC, Montana Small Business Development Center, Headwaters RC&D
Priority	2
Timeline	Ongoing
Action 10.3	Establish a “buy local” policy for the City of Deer Lodge. A buy local policy establishes that if products are available locally in the community, the City will look to buy local before purchasing online or through larger retailers. This can apply to everything from electronics to office materials. While a buy local policy may not have a major impact on local business it reinforces the City’s commitment to downtown and its business owners.
Partners	CDL, PCC
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term

Organization

Organization is key to achieving any sort of success in downtown. The best ideas and plans can and will fall short if organizational capacity is lacking. This means coordinating and maintaining communications with partnering agencies at both the state and local levels. Implementing this plan will require strong partnerships and realistic expectations in terms of what can be done in what amount of time and who has the capacity for each action. This also means creating a framework for how partnering organizations will communicate with one another and develop a shared path forward. In the wake of the 2015 Growth Policy, Deer Lodge has done well in developing an organizational structure for putting that plan into action. The action strategies below seek to build on that success by providing further recommendations for achieving sustained success in downtown.

Objective 11: Identify stable funding sources for downtown improvements

<p>Action 11.1</p>	<p>Create a Business Improvement District. A business improvement district (BID) is a special district where an additional assessment is placed on properties in the district. The funds generated by the assessment are used to fund projects and programs that benefit the property owners within that district and funds can only be used within the district. The use of funds is governed by a board of property owners or their representatives from the district. Funds can be used for promotion and marketing, events, beautification projects, maintenance of existing facilities, security, and infrastructure improvements. A BID in Deer Lodge would provide a reliable funding source for completing and maintaining projects aimed at beautifying downtown and attracting more customers to downtown businesses. It will give the community the tools to develop marketing campaigns to increase awareness of Deer Lodge throughout the region. Under Montana state law, Deer Lodge cannot simply create a BID but must have the support of the owners of at least 60% of the area in the district, at which point the City must pass a resolution to create a BID.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>CDL, PCC, downtown property owners</p>
<p>Priority</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Short-term</p>

Action 11.2	Work with local banks on offering low (or no) interest loans for community improvements. Many of the actions outlined in this plan will take capital investment to implement. While grants are a good resource, with increasing competition for limited resources they cannot not be counted on as a reliable funding source. One tool several small communities have used is no (or low) interest loans from local banks for community revitalization projects. Generally these programs involve a bank setting aside a specific dollar amount which is available to loan for community projects which meet certain criteria. In Deer Lodge this would require reaching out to local banks about their interest in starting a program for downtown improvements. Initially the program could start small to test its viability and usefulness and if successful could potentially continue into the future.
Partners	CDL, PCC, local banks
Priority	1
Timeline	Short-term

Objective 12: Work with local partners on creating a stable framework for implementing Deer Lodge’s Downtown Master Plan

Action 12.1	Create a committee of public and private stakeholders focused on implementing the Downtown Master Plan. The City of Deer Lodge cannot be expected to implement this plan on its own. Rather the City will need to partner with public and private stakeholders to leverage resources to put the plan into action. To ensure implementation does not languish the City should seek to develop a diverse committee of public and private stakeholders charged with implementing the actions in this plan. Potential partners include, but are not limited to, Powell County, Grant-Kohrs Ranch, Powell County Chamber of Commerce, Deer Lodge Preservation Inc., the Old Prison Museum, interested business, and property owners. A coordinated and widely supported implementation effort will start Deer Lodge on the right foot with regard to realizing the City’s vision for downtown.
Partners	See above narrative
Priority	1
Timeline	Short-Term

Action 12.2	Develop an annual (or biannual) work plan for implementing the Downtown Master Plan. It would make the most sense for a workplan to be developed by the committee referenced in action 12.1. Ideally, the work plan would identify a list of prioritized projects for the year, including projects to be completed within the year as well as projects that may take more upfront planning. In terms of budget, the work plan should identify stable funding sources as well as potential grants to apply for. The work plan should identify roles and responsibilities as well as a time table for completion. The work plan is an important component to keeping people on task and making sure stakeholders see the value of their participation.
Partners	See narrative under action 12.1
Priority	High
Timeline	Ongoing

Action 12.3	Maintain status in Montana’s Main Street Program and work on strengthening the existing Main Street Committee in Deer Lodge. Montana’s Main Street program provides an invaluable resource to Deer Lodge and communities throughout Montana. Deer Lodge’s membership as a Main Street community shows the City’s commitment to improving downtown. Furthermore, as a member community Deer Lodge is able to utilize resources provided by the program and is eligible for Main Street grants.
Partners	CDL
Priority	1
Timeline	Ongoing

Branding and Promotion

As mentioned throughout this plan, Deer Lodge has many assets that attract thousands of visitors each year. However, there is always opportunity to increase visitation to Deer Lodge and downtown. The key to this is getting the word out about Deer Lodge to more people, through more mediums, and in more areas. Coupled with this is the need to not only highlight existing assets, but also to develop new unique ideas for attractions and events that will get people to choose Deer Lodge when planning their next outing or vacation.

Objective 13: Market and promote Deer Lodge through a variety of platforms

Action 13.1	Create a brand, theme, and accompanying logo for Deer Lodge. To effectively market Deer Lodge and its downtown the City and partnering organizations need to develop a brand that sells Deer Lodge to would-be visitors. While thousands of visitors pass through Deer Lodge every year visiting Grant-Kohrs and the Old Prison museum, the City could capture even more visitors with an appealing and effective brand and accompanying marketing campaign. Deer Lodge’s brand should focus on the community’s history and aspects that make it unique. At the same time the brand must also appeal to prospective visitors and customers of downtown businesses.
Partners	CDL, PCC, interested Deer Lodge residents
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term
Action 13.2	Increase Deer Lodge’s online presence through social media. Increasingly people are turning to social media as a tool for trip planning and identifying where they want to travel next. This is especially true for younger generations. Social media sites like Facebook and Instagram could be effective and inexpensive platforms to showcase attractions in Deer Lodge and the beauty of the community. The City could work with the high school to hold an Instagram contest to find the best Deer Lodge photos from residents or could allow local residents to take over the City Instagram feed for a day to showcase Deer Lodge from different people’s perspective. Facebook is currently used effectively by the City and the Powell County Chamber of Commerce.
Partners	CDL, PCC
Priority	3
Timeline	Ongoing
Action 13.3	Develop and mail a hard copy community calendar with local and regional events. From Territorial Days to Pumpkin Sundays at Grant-Kohrs there are events happening in Deer Lodge throughout the warmer months of the year. To help keep residents and visitors informed of these events, and boost attendance, the City could work with the Powell County Chamber of Commerce on creating a calendar that is mailed out to area residents each spring – similar to what the Chamber has on its website.
Partners	CDL, PCC
Priority	3
Timeline	Short-term

Action 13.4	Develop a one-page Deer Lodge map displaying local attractions, shops, and restaurants. For visitors unfamiliar with Deer Lodge a map can serve as a useful tool for finding restaurants, local shops, museums, and other local attractions. Without the knowledge of where goods and services are located visitors to Deer Lodge may assume what they are looking for is unavailable and be apt to take their business elsewhere.
Partners	CDL, PCC
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term

Action 13.5	Encourage downtown merchants to update their Yelp and Google listings to better promote Deer Lodge businesses online. Whether it be a restaurant or an antique shop When visitors travel to Deer Lodge, they likely to rely on online resources such as Google Maps and Yelp to find what they are looking for. While most Deer Lodge establishments can currently be found on these sites, there is more opportunity to better craft messaging to potential customers. This can be done through providing or expanding business descriptions, adding professional pictures, or offering promotions.
Partners	CDL, PCC
Priority	3
Timeline	Short-term

Objective 14: Expand the number of events in downtown Deer Lodge

Action 14.1	Increase the number of unique off-season events in Deer Lodge. With summer being the high season for Deer Lodge it is easier to attract people downtown during these warmer months. While the downtown needs to attract customers year-round, it can be especially challenging to attract people downtown in winter when temperatures are lower and nights are longer. By establishing a few off-season events downtown, the City and its partners could provide a brief influx of business to downtown merchants. To attract people downtown the community should strive to make these events truly unique – the kind of experiences that are not a dime-a-dozen. Examples could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday themed Friday events in December where businesses stay open later. This could include fire barrels on corners, carolers downtown, and free hot chocolate.; or • A strange brew festival where local and regional brewers bring out their non-typical beers for sampling.
Partners	CDL, PCC, local business owners
Priority	2
Timeline	Short-term

Action 14.2	<p>Work with local farmers and vendors on creating a weekday evening farmers market downtown. Deer Lodge’s current Saturday farmers market at the community garden is a unique and valued asset in the community – this action is not aimed at discontinuing that market. Anymore farmers markets are more than just a place to buy produce from local farmers. They serve as a community gathering spaces, where residents and visitors come together to enjoy a social atmosphere, local crafts people sell their wares, and street performers come to entertain. As Butte and Missoula’s Saturday farmers markets may attract producers on the weekends Deer Lodge could reach out to local producers on their willingness to participate in an evening weekday market in Deer Lodge. A weekday market in Deer Lodge could serve to enliven downtown during summer evenings, attracting people of all ages to downtown. Additionally, a week day market would allow residents to restock their pantry in between weekend markets. Implementing this action would require the creation of a separate committee charged with organizing and running the market. The City could reach out to the Deer Lodge Community Garden group about their willingness to take that on or whether they know of any community members who have that capacity.</p>
Partners	CDL, Deer Lodge Community Garden
Priority	3
Timeline	Mid-term
Action 14.3	<p>Organize smaller weekly, or monthly, events in downtown during summer months. Large events like Territorial Days attract many people to downtown and are great fun for all who attend. However, these types of events take time and resources to plan and execute. Furthermore, outside of these events people may choose to visit downtown infrequently. This action is focused on creating small regular events that attract people downtown on a more continual basis. These types of events should be relatively simple from a logistics standpoint and should focus on highlighting downtown businesses. One examples used in many communities is First Fridays where downtown businesses stay open later, host art from local artists, and provide refreshments. The sky is the limit and the City and its residents can be creative in creating something unique to Deer – e.g. monthly street dances, theater performances on Main Street, community bike rides, etc. It should be noted that it takes time for these types of events to catch on as people will need to become familiar with when they occur. This is why it is critical to not lose steam if the first few events are not well attended. For these events to succeed all parties involved (business owners, the City, Chamber, etc.) will need to stay committed to its success, even if it takes a bit of time.</p>
Partners	CDL, PCC, downtown business owners
Priority	1
Timeline	Mid-term

(Endnotes)

1 <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/>

Appendix A - Survey Results

Community Survey Results

A community survey was made available at www.downtown-deerlodge.com beginning in mid-April of 2017 and was closed on Wednesday, June 14th with 244 responses, after removing duplicate entries. The results from the survey were used to identify the focus areas for the plan. The survey results also provided added insight into how residents feel about detailed aspects of downtown and what specific items they would like to see addressed. In this sense, the survey aided in developing the actions in the plan. Below are several key findings from the community survey.

Where are Respondents From?

- 78% of respondents live in Deer Lodge, while 12% live outside Deer Lodge in Powell County.

Where do Respondents Shop?

- 77% of respondents do most of their grocery shopping in Deer Lodge while only 9% of respondents do most of their non-grocery item shopping in Deer Lodge. This indicates that Deer Lodge has a lack of retailers selling durable goods.

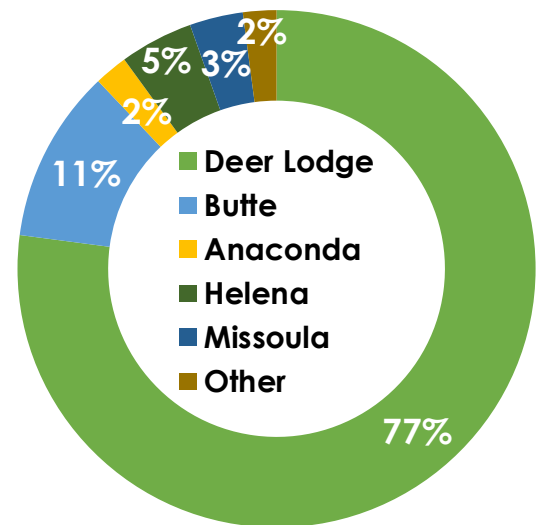
What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Shopping Downtown?

- When asked about the advantages of shopping downtown, 75% of respondents checked “support of local businesses” and 58% checked “knowing store owners and employees.” These results indicate respondents value supporting the local downtown economy.
- When asked about disadvantages of shopping downtown, 90% of respondents checked “limited selection of goods and services,” further indication of the lack of durable goods available in Deer Lodge.

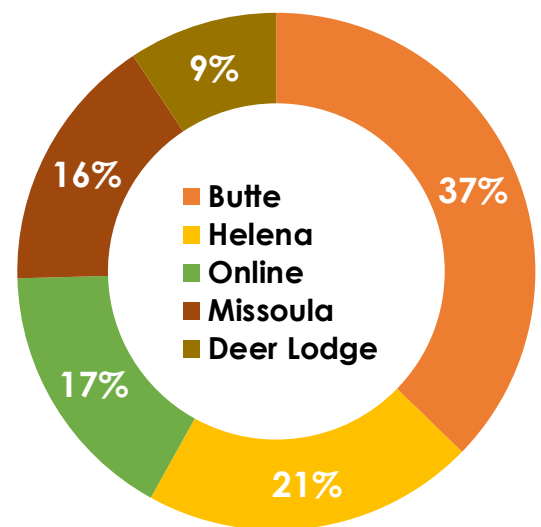
What Additional Businesses do Respondents Want to See Downtown?

- When asked about what additional businesses they would like to see downtown, a majority of respondents noted a clothing store (78%) and restaurants (54%).

Where Do You Do Most of Your Grocery Shopping?



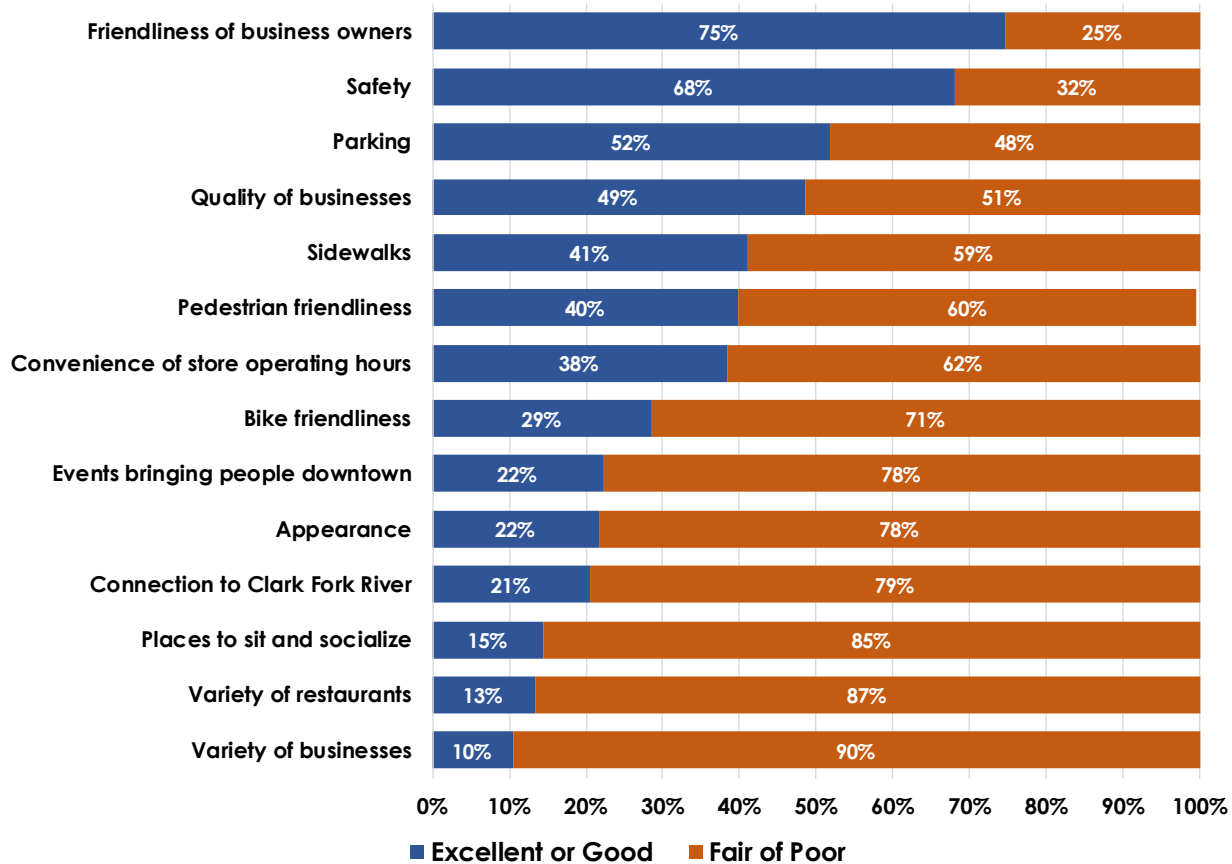
Where Do You Do Most of Your Non-Grocery Shopping?



How do Respondents Rate Downtown?

- Over 60% of respondents rated downtown as *excellent* or *good* in the categories of *friendliness of business owners* (75%) and *safety* (68%).
- Over 70% of respondents rated downtown as *fair* or *poor* in the categories of *variety of businesses* (90%), *variety of restaurants* (87%), *places to sit and socialize* (85%), *connection to Clark Fork River* (79%), *appearance* (78%), *events bringing people downtown* (78%) and *bike friendliness* (71%).

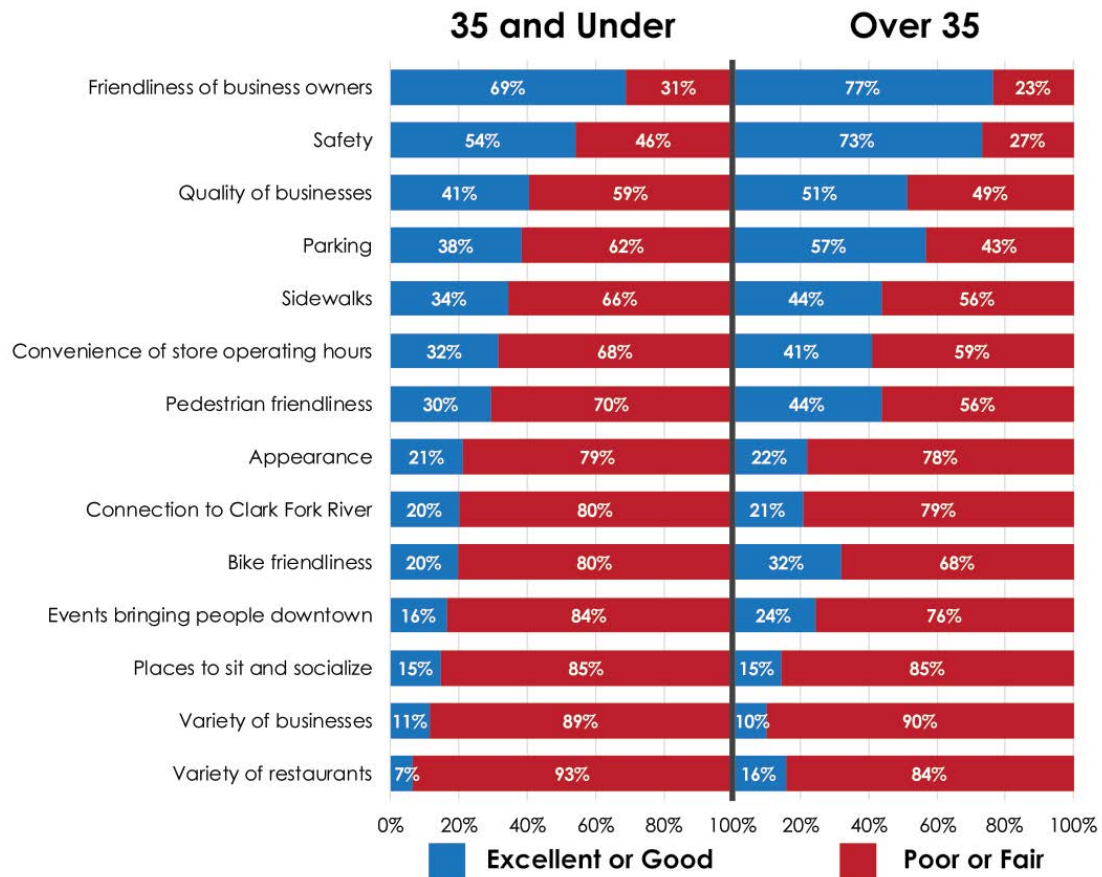
Rate Downtown in the Following Categories



How do Ratings of Downtown Differ by Age Group?

- In the categorical ratings for downtown, there were differences between the over 35 and 35 and under age groups, notably in the categories listed below.
 - Safety – 73% of the 35+ age group rated as *excellent* or *good* compared to 54% for the ≤ 35 age group
 - Parking – 57% of the 35+ age group rated as *excellent* or *good* compared to 38% for the ≤ 35 age group
 - Pedestrian Friendliness – 56% of the 35+ age group rated as *fair* or *poor* compared to 70% for the ≤ 35 age group.
 - Bicycle Friendliness – 68% of the 35+ age group rated as *fair* or *poor* compared to 80% for the ≤ 35 age group.

Rate Downtown in the Following Categories



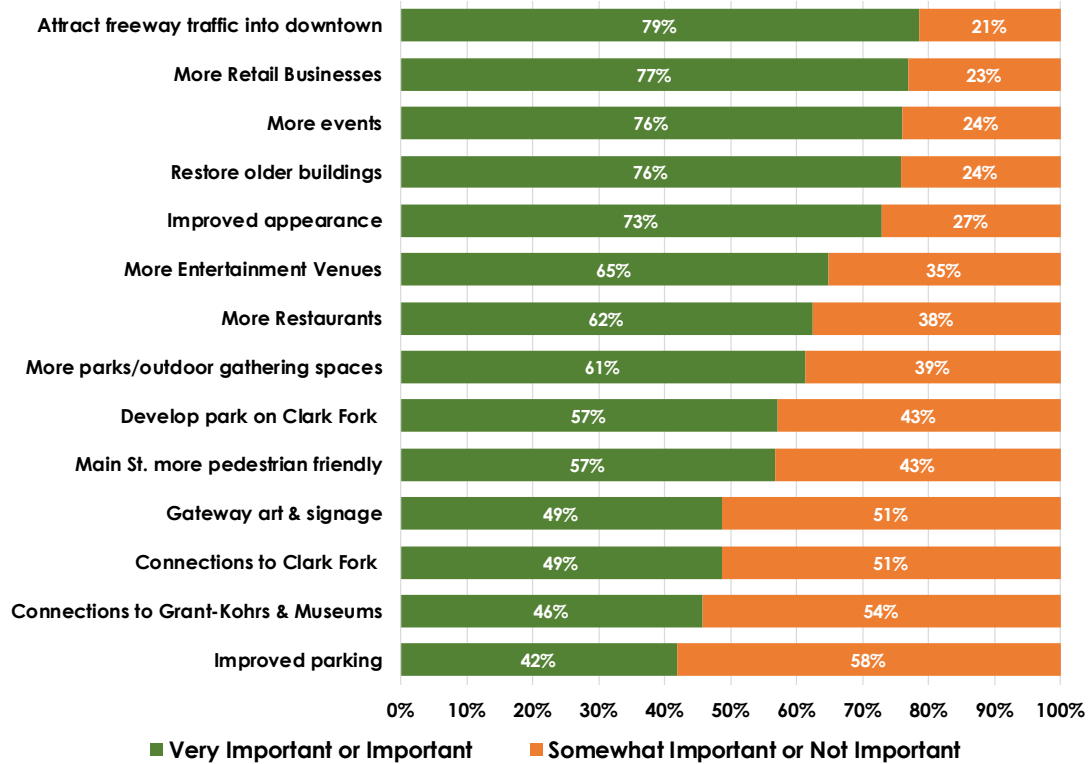
What Activities for Improving Downtown do Respondents Feel Are Most Important?

- Over 75% of respondents rated the following activities as *very important* or *important* – *attract freeway traffic downtown (79%), more retail businesses (77%), more events (76%), and restore older buildings (76%)*.
- A slight majority of respondents rated the following activities as *somewhat important* or *not important* – *improve parking (58%), connections to Grant-Kohrs & Museums (54%), connections to Clark Fork River (51%), gateway art and signage (51%)*.

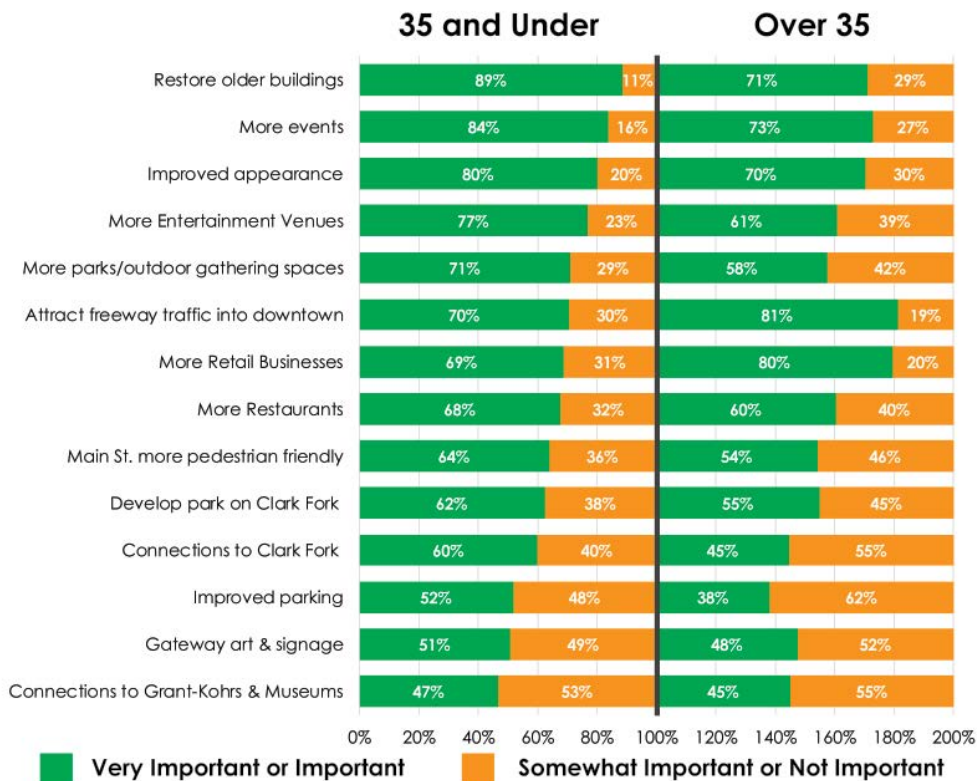
How do Age Groups Differ on their Views of Activities for Improving Downtown?

- The over 35 and 35 and under age groups differed slightly in what activities they feel are most important for downtown, notably in the categories listed below.
 - Restore Older Buildings – 71% of the 35+ age group felt this was *very important* or *important* compared to 89% for the ≤ 35 age group.
 - More Entertainment Venues – 61% of the 35+ age group felt this was *very important* or *important* compared to 77% for the ≤ 35 age group.
 - Connections to Clark Fork River – 45% of the 35+ age group felt this was *very important* or *important* compared to 60% for the ≤ 35 age group.
 - More Parks/Outdoor Gathering Spaces – 58% of the 35+ age group felt this was *very important* or *important* compared to 71% for the ≤ 35 age group.
 - Improved Parking – 62% of the 35+ age group felt this was *somewhat important* or *not important* compared to 48% for the ≤ 35 age group.

Rate the Importance of the Following Activities



Rate the Importance of the Following Activities



What other action items do you feel are important to improving downtown Deer Lodge? (Summary)

- Clean up the appearance of Deer Lodge.
- More activities for youth and families after 5:00 P.M. on weekdays and during weekends.
- Fill up vacant buildings.
- Public art.
- Historic Preservation.

If you could PRESERVE two things about downtown Deer Lodge what would they be?

- Historic buildings (overwhelming majority).
- Arrowstone Park.
- Rialto Theater.
- Deer Lodge Hotel.
- Small town atmosphere.

If you could CHANGE two things about downtown Deer Lodge what would they be?

- A place for kids to hang out.
- Appearance of Main Street.
- More residential on Main Street.
- People smoking on the sidewalk.
- More businesses occupying Main Street storefronts.
- More restaurants.
- Parking.
- Sidewalks.
- The mural on Missouri Street.

Business Owners Survey Results

At the same time as the community survey was available, a business owners survey was also released to business owners in Deer Lodge and property owners on Main Street. The survey was closed on Monday, June 19th with 20 responses. The intent of the business owners survey was to hear directly from business owners as to what they see as the most pressing issues facing downtown and how best to solve them. The survey was also used to gather information on business trends in downtown and to gauge support for two different funding mechanisms for downtown improvements. Below are several key findings from the business owners survey.

- 45% of respondents indicated that over the past year their business was *growing rapidly* or *growing slightly*.
- 37% of respondents stated they plan to expand their business in the next two years, while 11% stated they plan to sell.
- 50% of respondents felt that downtown parking was adequate, while 22% felt that it was inadequate only during summer months.

- 63% of respondents were *very supportive* or *supportive* of a voluntary membership fee for a downtown association.
- 32% of respondents were *very supportive* or *supportive* of a tax levied on downtown properties for downtown improvements (Business Improvement District), while 42% were *undecided*.
- Several respondents indicated a need to improve the appearance of Main Street.
- Several respondents felt Deer Lodge needs to better capitalize on tourists visiting Grant-Kohrs and the Old Prison/Auto Museum.
- Respondents indicated a need for affordable workforce housing.
- When asked about infrastructure needs, several respondents stated pedestrian amenities are needed, including sidewalk repair, signage, and lighting.

Appendix B - Public Meeting Results

Public Meeting #1

On Wednesday May 24th a public meeting was held at the Deer Lodge City Hall to kick off the planning process and obtain feedback from the community. At the meeting, attendees were broken into small groups and asked to brainstorm and prioritize what they saw as Deer Lodge's greatest assets and challenges. The prioritized assets and challenges were be used to focus the planning effort on the issues of greatest interest to Deer Lodge residents.

Commonly Identified Assets

- Historic downtown
- City is anchored by Grant-Kohrs and Old Prison/Auto Museum
- Arrowstone Park and trail system
- Outdoor recreation opportunities (fishing, hunting, biking, & river activities)
- Opportunely situated close to population centers and midway between Glacier and Yellowstone
- Cultural entertainment (Rialto Theater & Cutler Bros. Theater)
- Proximity to Clark Fork River

Commonly Identified Challenges

- Design of Main Street (too wide, not pedestrian friendly, vehicles travel too fast)
- Lack of financing tools
- Few living wage jobs
- Lack of restaurant and lodging options
- Public perception – “Deer Lodge is a prison town”
- The look and feel of 2nd Street
- Vacant land and buildings
- Curb appeal of Main Street
- Appearance of residential properties (lack of pride of ownership)
- High restoration costs for downtown historic buildings
- Lack of parking

Public Meeting #2

On Tuesday July 30th a public open house was held at the Deer Lodge Community Center to get feedback from residents on a draft series of action strategies. Meeting attendees were asked to place green dots

on the actions they felt were most important to Deer Lodge and red dots on actions they felt were not well suited for Deer Lodge. The results of the meeting are provided below.

Action	Green Dots	Red Dots
South west bound I-90 Interchange	17	0
Make Main Street ped. Friendly	12	0
Fill vacant stores with attractive displays	11	0
Develop park on Clark Fork River	9	0
Gateway art feature	9	0
Deer Lodge Hotel Restoration	9	13
Safe ped./bike option on Penn. Ave.	8	0
Develop a trail from Milwaukee to Grant-Kohrs.	8	0
Install wayfinding signs	7	0
Enforce blight ordinances	7	0
Spring cleaning day	7	0
Low/No interest loans	7	0
Bike Lanes on Main Street	6	3
Increase unique off-season events	6	0
Street trees	6	1
Pocket Park	6	0
Façade Improvement Program	6	0
No smoking on sidewalks	6	0
Recreation for youth	6	0
Bike racks on Main St.	5	2
Create a brand, theme, and logo	5	0
Community Calendar	5	0
Promote more public art	5	0
BID	5	0
Preserve America designated community	5	0
Informational kiosks at key points	4	0
Develop one-page map	4	0
Sunday and evening farmers market	4	0
Popup leases	4	0
Sidewalk Cafes	4	1
Implement parks and trails plans	4	0
Workplan	4	0
High visibility cross walks on Main St.	3	0
Increase online/social media presence	3	0
Historic Guidelines	3	0
Landscape requirements	3	0

Food trucks downtown	3	2
Downtown plan committee	3	0
Main Street Program	3	0
Events organization	3	0
Smaller regular events downtown	2	0
Event brainstorming meetings with merchants	2	0
Encourage merchants to update online pages	2	0
Organize business owners meeting	2	0
Pro-active targeted marketing plan	2	0
Provide marketing assistance to businesses	2	0
Provide assistance to new and existing businesses	1	0
Business plan contest	1	0
Establish a buy local policy	1	0
Community gardens	1	0
Establish a buy local campaign	0	0
Become a superhost community	0	0
Organize a meeting for larger employers	0	0
Offer website building course	0	0
Develop park on Penn Ave.	0	0